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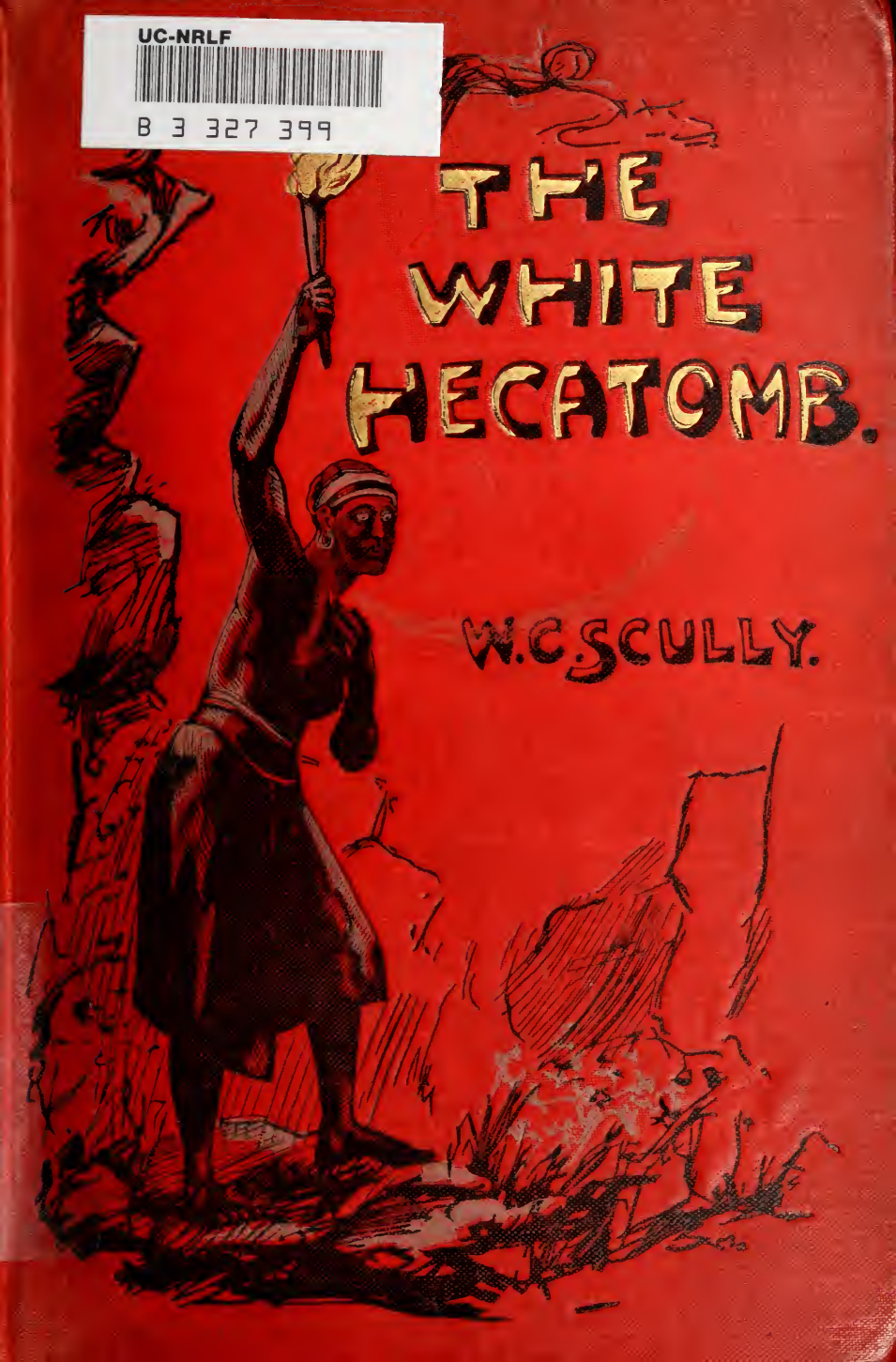
THE WHITE HECATOMB.



W. C. SCULLY.

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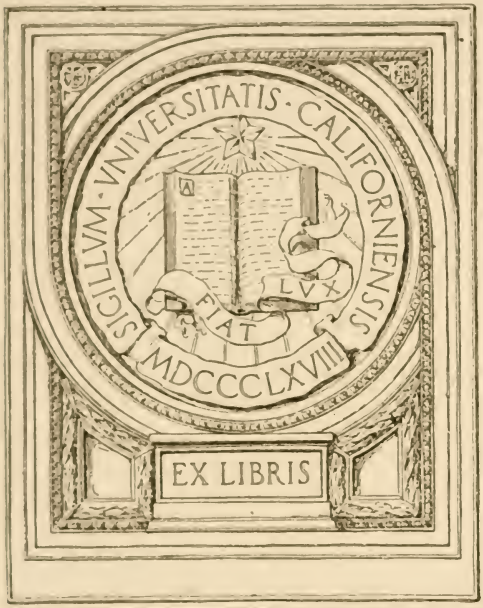

THE WHITE HECATOMB

AND OTHER STORIES

By

W. C. SCULLY

AUTHOR OF 'KAFIR STORIES'

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THE WHITE HECATOMB

"For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind."—*Hosea* viii. 7.

"EHEA, Inkosi am. I know by the smell of it that this snuff is of the same kind as that which my grandson brought from you the other day. Well, I am thankful that before I die I taste in my nose what really *is* snuff. But to think that I should have had to wait all these years for it;—and now to be unable to see its colour! There, I have kissed your hand, and that is all I can do to show my gratitude.

"That one like you—one who can have as much as he likes of such snuff—should want to come here and talk to an old woman such as I, is wonderful. You cannot be old, to judge by your voice. Is it not perhaps the young women you want to talk to? But give them none of that snuff,—they are

impudent children of no experience, and would not value it. Well, if it be myself that you want to talk to, my tongue is alive although my eyes are dead.

"When was I born, did you say? That I can hardly tell you. I think that none but myself are now living who saw that day. My father's clan dwelt far from here, beyond the Tugela river. He was just a common man of the Amangwanè tribe, and he stood close, until the day of his death, to the great fighting chief Matiwanè. In the days of my childhood I saw nothing but fighting and wandering about. I do not remember when we first began to wander, but I think my mother was wandering when she bore me. Tshaka had fallen upon us, the Amangwanè, and we, in turn, fell upon the Amahlubi, whom we followed, fighting, across the Quathlamba Mountains into a land of wide plains, high mountains, and great rivers.

"When still a little girl I have often sat on a hill with the women and the other children, and looked down upon the fighting. When the villages of the Bathlokua were burnt the sun and the whole sky were hidden by smoke.

"Matiwanè was one who loved blood. He drank the gall of every chief that was slain, to make him fierce. When he fled back to the Zulu country, Dingaan filled his mouth with the liver of an ox, and told the captive Hlubis to beat him with sticks on the belly until he died. But that was long afterwards, — after much blood had flowed. Blood, blood;—the light died in my eyes many years ago, yet whenever I think of the days when I was a child, I seem to see a great redness glowing through the darkness.

"When Tshaka fell upon us for the third time, he drove us back among the steep mountains of the Lesuto, and here we said we would henceforth dwell. After Tshaka's 'impi' had departed, Matiwanè sent back parties to gather some millet from the ruined fields, for our crops were nearly ripe when we were driven forth. Then our men took to hunting, and we lived on what they killed; but there was much sickness among us, because there was no grain for the children to eat, the little grain we had being kept for seed. When the children cried with hunger they were told to wait until the millet

grew, for that then their hunger would be satisfied.

"The spring rains fell early, and on every mountain-ledge we broke the ground and planted the millet. It grew as millet has never grown before or since, in spite of the steepness of the ground, and we used to go and sit among the high thick stalks, and fondle them, and think that in a few weeks more we should be feasting upon the food we loved so much and had been without for such a long time.

"Just as the grain commenced forming, small flights of locusts began to arrive from the westward. We stood around the millet patches with boughs of trees, and drove away the locusts that attempted to alight. One day we saw a brown cloud arising in the west, and this grew and spread over the mountain tops until it covered the whole land. Then the cloud descended upon our fields, and we saw that it was a great flight of locusts.

"Men, women, and children then fought as they had never fought in the worst days of battle against the spears of Tshaka, but it was all in vain. Next day the millet-

fields were bare, and the men wailed like women.

"Then the men sharpened their spears once more, and we set our faces to the southward. We covered the face of the land like the locusts we were fleeing from, and the tribes fled before us like game before a troop of wild dogs. When we crossed the great river (the Orange) we turned to the eastward, and over-ran the country of the Abatembu, who never stood to fight us on a single occasion. Then we turned to the northward, and wandered on, secure in our great numbers, and driving herds of spoil. At length we crossed the Umtata river and took possession of the mountain range between that and the Inxu river. Here, we said, we will make a home, and now we will cease from wandering about like wild animals. We had spoiled the Abatembu of grain, so we broke the ground and again sowed millet, of which we gathered a good harvest. We built huts, and we thought that at length we should have rest. I was then a young girl, hardly old enough to marry.

"One day, in the winter-time, we saw great armies coming up against us from

several directions, but we were not afraid, for Matiwanè had many spears, and his men feared not to die in war. One small body of men clad in bright red garments came towards us, moving together as one man. When they came close, they stretched themselves out like a snake, and then they seemed to place tubes like black reeds to their mouths, through which they blew white smoke. Then our men began to fall dead, and our hearts were turned to water at this dreadful thing, the like of which we had never before seen. With the smoke came a fearful noise like thunder, and we thought that the children of the sky had come down in wrath to destroy us. Soon we heard a louder thunder, and then balls of iron fell out of the sky on us, and smashed our men into bloody heaps where they stood thickest. The Abatembu and the Amagcalèka now moved up from behind the men in red, and fell upon us with the spear.

"Then took place a great slaughter, and those of us who escaped from it were few. Women and children were sought in their hiding-places and killed with the spear, whilst the old and sick were burned quick in the

huts. My father was slain early in the day, and my mother and I fled with some others back towards the Quathlamba Mountains, meaning to reach, if possible, the country of the Lesuto, and place ourselves under Moshesh, the chief of the Basuto.

"We fled up the valley of the Inxu river, driving a few cattle before us. It was in the middle of winter, and at night the cold seemed to burn like fierce fire. We were pursued by the Abatembu, but they could not overtake our cattle, and having no food, were obliged to turn back. When we reached the mountains the feet of our cattle were so sore that we had to slaughter every beast, and then we went on, carrying the meat.

"No rain had fallen since our flight began, but as we ascended the mountains the cold became more and more fierce. Fuel was scarce, and every morning many lay dead around the fire-places.

"Just before we reached the top of the mountain range the weather became warmer, and black clouds came rolling up. As night fell the wind became suddenly again cold, and then snow began to fall.

"That night saw the end of all but me. We crowded together in three lots for the sake of warmth,—all our clothing had been thrown away in the flight, so we were quite naked. The women and children crouched in the middle, and the men placed themselves around and held up their shields to try and keep off the snow. One ring of men sat on the ground and held their shields straight up, others sloped their shields outwards, whilst a few held theirs up with outstretched arms, the whole thus taking the shape of a hut.

"We huddled together as close as we could, but the wind carried the snow in between the shields in fine powder. The chattering of teeth sounded for a little while louder than the wind, and ever and anon cries of 'Moi-ba-bo'[1] arose. Then the men in the group next to the one in which I was turned their spears against each other in their pain, and those of them who still lived scattered and died among the rocks.

"After a time the men of the outer ring died where they sat, and the last thing I

[1] A native exclamation expressive of anguish or distress.

remember is that a shield sank down on me; then I fell asleep. My legs and my body to the breast were covered by the people lying around me, and I was leaning forward against a man who was quite dead, although there was a little warmth still left in his body. Before I slept I ceased to feel pain, and became quite comfortable.

"I awoke feeling sharp pangs all over me. I could not move, as I was held fast by the bodies among which I was lying, and the shield above me was pressing downward with a great weight. All was quite dark, and I could hear no sound.

"I struggled hard, and gradually began to loosen myself. Suddenly I felt something slip away from the shield above me, and then I moved the shield away easily to one side, and as I did this something seemed to strike me on the eyes, a great light flashed all around me, and then I could see nothing, although I could breathe free air. It was this, the European doctor said, which, years afterwards, caused me to lose my eyesight altogether.

"You can understand what had happened: —The sun was shining brightly, there was

no cloud in the sky, but the whole world was white,—white,—white ;—no one, before or since, ever saw such a whiteness. I had lain so long under the shield in the darkness, that the sunlight and the snow burnt into my eyes like lightning.

"I rubbed my eyes gently, and gradually I began to see. I was still held fast by the dead people lying around me, but I kept struggling, and gradually I freed myself. Then I first recollected where I was and saw what had happened. I cried aloud and tried to remove the snow from the mound out of which I had dragged myself, but I was too stiff to do much, and I kept getting dizzy and tumbling down on the snow.

"Not far off was a rocky bluff, against which the sun was shining warmly. I crept to a ledge and sat down on some dry grass, from which I shook off the snow ; soon, then, I began to get warmer. After a while I went back and moved the snow away from one side of the heap. First I reached a shield, and after some trouble I was able to pull this aside. Under it I found dead limbs and bodies. I kept removing the snow until I uncovered my mother's face.

I touched it, and found it stiff and colder than the snow. Then I cried aloud and went away.

"I then picked up a shield, the stick of which was protruding from the snow, and went forth to seek for the dwellings of men. As I departed I passed another mound of snow, out of which I could see the ends of the shield-sticks protruding. The snow was beginning to melt, and I could see the limbs of those who had scattered among the rocks, appearing here and there.

"I stumbled along over the snow without seeing anything but a dreadful whiteness, that made the water stream from my eyes. I suffered terribly from pains all over me, especially in my feet, and I wished for death. Every now and then the wind blew so cold that it seemed to cut me like a spear all over my naked body. I tried at first to keep it off with the shield, but found that on account of my eyes I was obliged to hold the shield up over my head so as to prevent the bright sunlight from falling on my face.

"I wandered on and on until the sun began to fall, and then the thought came to me to find a place in one of the valleys to

die in,—for I did not want to die on the white, lonely top of the mountain. I had seen no signs of men or cattle, and I had given up all hope. I no longer wished to live. Looking down a long slope I saw that in a deep valley beyond it the snow had disappeared, so I thought to try and get down there, out of the horrible whiteness which froze my body and burnt my eyes like fire, and there lie down and die at once.

"I reached the edge of the valley, which had steep sides, and soon I found a footpath which led down sideways. This I followed to the foot of a steep, narrow cliff, where I sat down and rested. Then I heard a noise as of a stone rolling down the mountain side, coming from the other side of the flank of the cliff, so I stood up and went quickly forward. Just then I heard another noise, and a large stone hurtled past me, and crashed into a patch of scrub just below. Out of this several hares leaped, and then ran away over the snow in different directions. Then I heard a shout from near the top of the cliff, so I looked up and saw a man bounding down the steep slope.

"The man was young, hardly more than a boy. He was armed with an assegai and several light throwing-clubs, and he carried two dead hares slung over his shoulder. He ran to where I was standing and accosted me, asking who I was and where I had come from. I began to weep, and told him everything I could remember.

"'What,' said he, 'are you one of the "Fetcani,"[1] who have been slaying our people? I think I must kill you, because many of my friends have died under the spears of Matiwanè.'

"At this I told him that I did not mind whether he killed me or not, as I was already dying of cold and hunger. Then he examined me more closely, and after a short time he began to laugh.

"'Come along,' he said, 'I will not kill you to-day. Perhaps you will grow fat and pretty, and I may by and by take you as my wife. I can at any time kill you if I want to.'

"His kraal was not far off. He had come

[1] The word "fetcani" means "enemies." It was specially applied to the horde of Matiwanè, which was at enmity with all other tribes.

out to hunt hares by rolling rocks down the mountain side to drive them from the bushes in which they were hiding, and then following their tracks through the snow.

"We reached the kraal, and I was there fed and kindly treated. The name of the young man was Masubana, and the kraal belonged to his father. Masubana was his father's 'great son.'

"Two years afterwards I married Masubana. He died long ago—shortly before I lost my sight. For many years I was poor and miserable; then my eldest son Ramalèbè, who had joined Lèbènya's clan, brought me down here to Matatièlè to dwell with him. He also is dead, but his children give me enough food, and a blanket now and then.

"Come again, my father, and I will try and think of some more of what happened in the old days. That snuff seems to make me young again. See that you give none of it to foolish people of no experience, who perhaps would not value it at its true worth. Let me once more kiss your hand."

NOTE.—The foregoing relates to the defeat of the Amangwanè horde by Colonel Somerset at Imbulumpini on August 27, 1828, and its subsequent annihilation in the pursuit by the Amagcalèka and Abatembu impis under Hintza and 'Ngub'incuka respectively. Three bodies of fugitives escaped from the field of battle, only to meet a worse fate than that of being killed in the fight. One party, the largest, was driven nearly to the source of the Orange river, and there burnt alive in a valley full of long grass, in which they had taken refuge. Another made its way to the north-east, and was cut to pieces by the Amabaca under Ncapayi, at the base of the Intsiza Mountain, in what is now East Griqualand. The third perished in the manner described in the tale. The horde must have numbered considerably over a hundred thousand souls. It was completely wiped out of existence.

THE VENGEANCE OF DOGOLWANA

"The dark places of the earth are full
Of the habitations of cruelty."—*Psalm* lxxiv.

"Whose graves are set in the sides of the pit."
Ezekiel xxxii. 23.

THE DEATH OF THE CHIEF

THE old chief of the Amagamedse tribe lay dying in his hut. It was a warm summer's evening, with a sense of moisture on the almost silent breeze, which was borne from the other side of the valley, over which a slight thunderstorm had passed.

Umsoala, the chief, lay on a mat under which some dry grass had been spread to ease his loosened bones. He was partially propped against the body of old Dogolwana, his faithful and tried attendant. Dogolwana sat with his left arm around his beloved master's waist. He had bravely sustained for a long time a painfully strained position.

Sitting silently on the ground, against the circular wall of the hut, were a number of old men and a few women, all clad in blankets, their knees drawn up to their chins. Between the centre-pole and the dying man sat a young woman, who held a little boy of about five years of age in her arms. On a log of wood, near the dying man's feet, sat the Magistrate of the district and the District Surgeon. They had been hurriedly sent for on the previous day when the paralytic stroke, which was putting a sudden period to the old chief's existence, had fallen.

The dying chief was a man of enormous build. He was covered by a blanket to the middle, but his trunk and arms, gaunt and wrinkled with age, were bare. His chest did not heave, as he was breathing from the diaphragm. His face was grey and shrunken, and but for the eyes, which were bright and lively, one might have almost thought him already dead.

After his lips had been moistened with water brought by the young woman in a cleft calabash, the chief spoke, his voice at first broken and trembling, but gaining steadiness and volume under the stimulus of excitement as he proceeded :

"I am dying alone . . . alone . . . for a man is alone when his children desert him. Where are my sons? Have they not been sent for?"

Old Dogolwana replied in a low tone:

"Yes, my chief and father."

"My sons, for whose sakes I have striven, leave me lonely at the hour of my death. There is Songoza, my 'Great Son,' whom I have asked the Government to recognize as chief in my place. I made him rich and now he is poor. I filled his kraal with cattle, and he has filled his huts with women until to-day his kraal stands empty. There is Gonyolo, eldest son of my right hand. I gave him the cattle of his house last year and told him to keep his mother in comfort till she died. One by one the cattle are driven to the village and sold for brandy. They tell me his mother has to go to a neighbouring kraal to beg for a drink of milk. When I went to visit Bawela a few months ago, I found him drunk with beer. He and his friends mocked me to my face. The bones of cattle were strewn around the huts, and a fat cow had just been slaughtered. And Philip, that I sent to school and kept there until he had learned nearly as much as a Magistrate—does

he not ride around amongst the people telling them not to listen to my words? Nomtsheke —Zoduba and the others—all children, though men in years. And now I am near my death, and none but this poor little Gqomisa is near me. Come here, boy."

The mother half arose and pushed forward the little boy, who shrank back at first; then crouching down on his face and knees at his father's side, he began to cry.

Old Dogolwana seemed to divine what the old chief wanted. He lifted the powerless arm from the elbow, and let the hand rest on the back of the crouching child.

After another sip of water, Umsoala recommenced speaking. He now addressed the Magistrate:

"You have always been a father to me and to my people, and your coming now makes my heart lighter. We have known each other for many years, and the knowledge has brought trust. This little boy Gqomisa is my youngest child. There sits his mother Notemba, the daughter of Dogolwana. I wish to tell you, so that all may know, that the herd of black cattle here at my 'great place' belongs to Gqomisa, and is left in charge of his mother, old Dogolwana, and

Dogolwana's son Kèlè. I have paid out their shares of cattle to Songoza and to all my other sons, and if they should try to take what belongs to this boy, I want the strength of the Government to shield him from wrong. Will you promise to protect him ?"

"I will protect him," replied the Magistrate.

"He is such a little child. It is true he has Dogolwana, and Kèlè who is the bravest and strongest man of my tribe, to protect him, but his enemies will be many. I ask the Government, in its strength, to stand on his side. I took the side of the Government when the Tshobeni raised the war-cry in the great rebellion, and the Governor himself told me that I dammed the flood of war, and that my services would never be forgotten. I only ask that the Government may now keep my little boy from harm."

"I will be his father," said the Magistrate.

The Magistrate and the District Surgeon had far to ride, so they arose to take their leave of the dying chief. He was past all possibility of recovery, and had only a few more hours to live. The Magistrate bent down and spoke in a voice broken by emotion,

holding the time Umsoala's cold and lifeless hand.

"I leave you now because I must return to my duties. We will never meet again unless it be in that land beyond the grave. We have worked together all these years, and my heart is heavy at parting with you, my old friend. I only hope that your son Songoza will follow in the ways of his father."

"My son, my son. Why is he not here to hearken to my last words? Be a father to Songoza. Advise him. He is young and headstrong—perhaps the years may bring him wisdom. Bear with him for the sake of my people, to whom I have tried to be a father."

"I will bear with a lot for your sake," said the Magistrate. "Now good-bye, old friend. I know you are brave, and that you fear nothing for yourself. You will be all right—wherever you go to. I will try and influence Songoza for good, and I will protect your little son Gqomisa. Good-bye . . . old friend. . . ."

THE SEPULTURE

The old chief died next morning just as the day was breaking. Immediately after his death the women and most of the men left the hut and dispersed silently. No one was allowed to enter the hut in which the body lay, and all inquiries were answered with the statement, "The chief is very near death," or "Our father is about to draw his last breath." As day wore on a round pit, three feet in diameter and about six feet deep, was dug on a ridge which overhung the "great place." Every one then knew that the chief was no more, but custom forbade the fact of his death to be acknowledged.

At the same time another excavation was being secretly dug deep in the heart of a large forest in an adjoining valley. This was the real grave. Among the more important Bantu clans the last resting-place of the chief is always kept a profound secret. The object of this is to prevent an enemy obtaining the bones and, by their means, working magic against the tribe.

In the middle of the night, the dead body, with the legs flexed and the knees bound up

to the chin, was borne out of the hut by Dogolwana and three other old men. It was carried by means of two poles between which it was slung after the manner of a sedan chair. Avoiding the footpaths, they hurried the dead chief up the side of the mountain, and then plunged into the forest, stumbling over rocks and dead trees in their course. The hoarse bark of the bush-bucks challenging each other echoed across the ravine, the jackals yelled at the stars from the grassy hill-tops, and the brown owls moaned from the tall yellow-wood trees. Every now and then unseen forest creatures would rustle through the undergrowth, or a frightened loorie flutter away, breaking its bright plumage against the branches in the darkness. In the broken fringe of cliff over the river-way a leopard made a dash at a troop of sleeping baboons which, having heard the alarm-call of the sentinel, darted away and escaped with hoarse roarings.

When the bearers paused to rest, as they frequently did, the forest seemed full of awful whisperings. It contained the graves of the dead chief's ancestors—secret places known to no living man. It seemed to the bearers as if the spirits of the dead were

abroad in the rustling darkness, mustering to welcome a long-waited-for companion—a son and subject made peer by the patent of death.

They found the open grave. A pit had been sunk, and a large, dome-shaped excavation made in its side. Dogolwana had already been chosen for the awful but honourable task of entering this chamber after the body had been placed there, and finally disposing of the latter for its long rest. The Kafirs have the most intense horror of a dead body, and the man who enters the grave-chamber with a dead chief becomes a chief himself immediately upon emerging—so highly is the dead esteemed.

The body of Umsoala was placed on a mat, in a sitting posture, facing the "great place," where the herd of black cattle that he had loved so well were kraaled every night. The left hand had been bound across the breast, with the open palm inwards. The right hand and arm had been allowed to stiffen in a flexed position, and in the hand a spear was placed, the handle resting on the ground and the blade pointing upwards. At his side were an earthen pot, a calabash, and a wooden pillow.

The face of the lateral excavation was then filled up with stones, the builders saying the while in low tones: "Watch over us." "Remember your people in the place to which you have gone." "Do not forget that we are your children."

After the building up of the excavation was finished, the grave was filled in with earth, and then bushes and twigs were strewn on it so as to conceal as far as possible all signs of its existence. After this, Dogolwana and his companions separated, and returned to the "great place," each by a different course.

Just before day broke, a bright flame suddenly leaped to the sky—the chief's hut had been set alight in several places at once. Soon a mass of flame-shot smoke climbed into the still morning air, in the form of a massive fiery column with an immense black capital.

When day broke, old Dogolwana and his companions could be seen just completing the filling in of the other grave, which had been dug on the ridge at the back of the "great place." Over it they piled heavy stones, and afterwards they dragged bushes up and built a surrounding kraal-fence.

Within the enclosure thus formed cattle would be folded for about two years. A small hut was built in the immediate vicinity, and here the watchers of the grave took up their abode. According to native custom these are authorized to beat and rob any stranger coming near the grave. The persons of the watchers are sacred, and they are not subject to actions at law, nor can they be put to death for any crime during the period of their watching. The kraal surrounding the grave is an inviolable sanctuary even for the worst criminals, and the cattle folded there may never be killed, nor can their progeny be in any way disposed of until the very last one of the original cattle has died.

THE KILLING OF KÈLÈ

In due course, Songoza was duly declared chief of the Amagamedse. In an address to the assembled people, the Magistrate highly extolled the old chief, and exhorted his successor to follow Umsoala's example. Songoza was reticent; he stood with the other sons of the late chief around him, and listened quietly to the Magistrate's words.

The assembly dispersed in silence. It was evident that the memory of the dead man was not held in esteem. As a matter of fact he had of late years rendered himself unpopular by leaning towards civilized methods and ideas, and discouraging the grosser forms of superstition. Songoza was known to be reactionary, but as the tribe would have acknowledged no one else, Government was constrained to recognize him as his late father's successor.

Two days afterwards, a messenger came hurrying in from old Dogolwana to report that Songoza had swooped down and driven off the herd of black cattle belonging to little Gqomisa. The Magistrate thereupon sent for Songoza, who, after considerable pressure, consented to return them, so they were restored, under police supervision, to old Dogolwana.

The country of the Amagamedse was a border territory, and just over its bounds lay the country of the Unondaba, an independent native state. A few months after the death of Umsoala, Songoza began to profess great friendship for Kèlè, the son of old Dogolwana. There took place no function at Songoza's "great place" (each

chief, on his accession, chooses a "great place" for himself) to which Kèlè was not specially invited, and several of the chief's cattle were assigned to him to milk, according to the custom known as "'Nquoma."

Songoza arranged to add to his harem a girl of the Unondaba tribe, the daughter of a petty chief who dwelt about ten miles from the border, and when the first instalment of the "lobola" cattle were sent, Kèlè was one of those selected to take charge of and deliver them. Three men besides Kèlè were sent, namely, Pandule, Sogogo, and Rali.

Just about this time Songoza's mother, Manolie, became ill. She lay on a mat and coughed. On the fourth day of her illness her pains became very great, and she kept pressing her hand to her right side and saying that there was fire within her body. After this she wandered in her mind for several days. At intervals she partially regained her senses, and then she kept calling to the chief, her son, to find out who had bewitched her. So Songoza sent men with an ox to Hloba, a renowned witch-doctor, who lived at Xabakaza, with a message asking him to "smell out" the person who had bewitched Manolie.

Kèlè, with his three companions, started with the "lobola" cattle on the day after the messengers went to Hloba. They crossed the border, and slept at a kraal about five miles from the dwelling of the bride-elect. Here a goat was killed for them, and they feasted late into the night. Next morning they arose, lit a fire, and began cooking the remainder of the goat's flesh in a pot.

They were sitting round the fire talking, when a man was seen approaching. This turned out to be Xosa, one of Songoza's Indunas. His arrival occasioned some surprise, and in response to an inquiry, he stated that he was carrying a message from Songoza to the bride's father. Just then, having caught Pandule's eye, he made a quick movement with his lips, and dropped his gaze. After this, Rali stood up and walked a short distance away to collect some fire-wood. Xosa followed him, and said in a whisper:

"Manolie is dead, and Kèlè has been 'smelt out'; Songoza has sent me to tell you and the others to kill him."

Rali, having in mind Kèlè's great strength and courage, replied:

"Son of my father, how can we do it? He has his shield, spear, and club, and some of us will surely die. Why did not the chief send a larger party?"

"I do not know," replied Xosa, "but the order is that he is to be killed at once before he returns over the border to within reach of the hand of the Government."

"What plan do you think will be best?" asked Rali. "A blow from a club would not be safe, for his hair is thick and his head-ring is heavy and strong."

"Nevertheless, the club is the best," replied Xosa; "one can stand behind him as he leans over the fire, and strike him just over and in front of the ear below the head-ring, where the bone is thin."

Then they walked back to the fire with the wood, meaning to tell Pandule and Sogogo as soon as an opportunity should offer.

Just afterwards Kèlè stood up and walked away, leaving his weapons behind. Then Pandule and Sogogo were told. They were much astonished; all knew that Kèlè was innocent. They discussed the best mode of killing him. Pandule was very much against using the club, for fear of an unskilful blow. Sogogo was a strong man and an expert

fighter. So it was finally decided that the spear should be the weapon, clubs (amabunguza) being kept in readiness in case they should be required. Xosa refused to help in the killing by using any weapon. He was not a strong man, and he said that the chief had only told him to convey a message to the others.

After a short time Kèlè returned, and again took his seat by the fire, sitting on his heels. Sogogo stood up, yawned, stretched himself, and took up his spear, which he pretended to sharpen on a stone. Pandule and Rali also stood up. They took their clubs and began comparing them, pretending to dispute as to the respective weights and workmanship. Xosa then moved from where he was, and sat opposite Kèlè. These two were now sitting with the fire and the pot of meat between them.

Then Pandule remarked that the meat must now be sufficiently cooked. Sogogo continued: "You, Kèlè and Xosa, lift the pot from the fire so that we can eat, and then proceed on our journey."

Rali added:

"Do not try and lift it by yourself, Xosa, for you are not strong enough."

Xosa thereupon seized the pot by the rim on one side with both hands, and Kèlè bent forward and did likewise. Then Sogogo, who stood ready, with his right hand towards Kèlè's back, plunged the spear into Kèlè's left side just below the arm-pit. Kèlè gave a roar and sprang up, but Rali and Pandule struck him at the same time on the head and neck with their clubs. He fell dead across the fire.

They then took the body and dragged it for a short distance down the hill to a point where there were some large rocks. After this they returned to the fire, and found Xosa busy cleaning the meat which, on account of the overturning of the pot, was full of ashes.

Songoza sent a present of two oxen to the chief of the Unondaba with an apology for having soiled the earth of his territory with the blood of a wizard, and excusing himself on the ground that the unreasonableness of the laws imposed by the white man prevented him from administering justice in his own country. The Unondaba chief sent a message in reply, to the effect that he fully approved of his brother's action, and sympathized in the inconvenience caused by the vexatious

restrictions imposed by European government. He added that the Unondaba territory was always at Songoza's disposal for similar operations.

Old Dogolwana and his wife were nearly mad with grief at Kèlè's death. It was the thought of their responsibility in respect of little Gqomisa that brought them to a condition of outward reasonableness. Kèlè's widow and her little baby son came to dwell with the old people, and a deadly revenge was sworn against the murderers of Kèlè.

THE PLOT

After Kèlè's death old Dogolwana redoubled his care of little Gqomisa. He and Notemba hardly ever let the child out of their sight. Every night the little one's mat was unrolled between that of his protector and the wall of the hut. Three of Dogolwana's grandsons—lads between twelve and sixteen years of age—looked after the cattle. Another widowed daughter-in-law, with the widow of Kèlè, cultivated the maize-field.

Dogolwana was obliged to dissemble his hatred of Songoza, who, however, disclaimed all complicity in the killing of Kèlè, and

often visited the late chief's "great place." No native, even under the Government, could afford to defy the paramount chief. Dogolwana brooded over his intended vengeance with deadly persistency. What form that vengeance was to take, he had not been able to decide, but revenged he would be, so he chewed the cud of implacable resentment, and bided his time.

Philip, the educated half-brother of little Gqomisa, often visited the "great place," and he, as much as Songoza, was hated and feared by old Dogolwana. Philip was a cold-natured, cunning man. He had dwelt, ever since his father's death, at the kraal of Songoza, who was completely under his influence.

The herd of black cattle, which numbered several hundred head, was ever in the mind of Songoza, and Philip was continually reminding him that only the life of little Gqomisa stood between him and his possession. Songoza was poor—his former wealth squandered in purchasing fresh wives. He already possessed upwards of twenty, for he endeavoured to add every handsome girl he saw to his harem. In his sinister mind, acted on by the evil influences of Philip, the

wish for the little boy's death soon ripened into a murderous resolve.

Songoza's chief wife Mahlokoza, a woman of considerable force of character, was the only one of his wives who possessed any influence over him, and her son Umkilwa, a boy of about seven years of age, was the only being who inspired him with anything like affection. In his way, Songoza loved this boy, who already gave evidence of possessing a somewhat brutal nature.

Mahlokoza and Philip between them hatched out a plot against little Gqomisa, and after all the details had been worked out, Songoza was taken into their confidence. His stupidity would have rendered him useless in the preliminary stages of the conspiracy.

About six months after Umsoala's death, in the winter, Mahlokoza's second son, a child of three years of age, sickened and nearly died. As the child recovered, Mahlokoza herself became ill, and the witch-doctor was sent for. After the exercise of most powerful incantations he announced that the sufferers had not been bewitched by any being of flesh, but that some evilly-disposed, disembodied spirits, who held a spite against

the "great house," were plaguing them. There existed, he officially declared to a large assemblage, one, and only one, possible remedy. The chief must transfer his great wife and her children to the "great place" of his late father, and there cause to be slaughtered by him (the witch-doctor) a young black bull from the herd. This sacrifice would attract the "imishologu," or ancestral spirits, who would rally round the "great house," and drive away the inimical ghosts.

Old Dogolwana was obliged to agree to this, and even to assist at the ceremonial, knowing as he full well did that some treachery was afoot against little Gqomisa. Mahlokoza, after she and her children had been sprinkled with the blood of the bull, declared herself much better, and began making preparations for returning home at once. However, the function was not yet at an end. The witch-doctor went through some further most elaborate ritual, and then fell into a trance. On awakening he declared to have again received a communication from the spirits dwelling in the unseen, this time to the effect that the great wife and her children were required to remain at

the late chief's "great place" for at least two weeks, at the end of which period the evil ones, who dared not venture near so sacred a locality, would have left the neighbourhood in disgust.

Here again old Dogolwana was obliged to submit. He now felt that matters were developing rapidly, and that the crisis was approaching fast. Mahlokoza and her two sons were assigned a hut next door to the one occupied by little Gqomisa and his two guardians.

Trouble began on the very first day—just after the witch-doctor left and the company dispersed — for Umkilwa and his younger brother fell upon little Gqomisa with their small clubs, and mauled him cruelly before old Dogolwana's wife, who was the only one near, could interfere. This was added as a considerable item to the already heavy account debited against Songoza and his house.

However, next day things went somewhat more smoothly. Three of the black cows were assigned to Mahlokoza's hut for milking purposes, and a supply of corn was delivered in baskets every day.

Philip became a constant visitor, and now

and then Songoza called in passing. One morning, about ten days after Mahlokoza's arrival, Songoza and Philip arrived together. All the visitors were invited to partake of beer in old Dogolwana's hut.

Kèlè's widow, Mamiekwa, was a silent little woman with very bright eyes. She was continually hovering around Mahlokoza and the others, trying to hear what they talked about, but hitherto she had been unable to overhear anything.

On this occasion she announced her intention of spending the day in a neighbouring forest seeking for medicinal roots, so she handed over her baby to old Dogolwana's wife, asking her to look after it until evening. She managed to whisper to old Dogolwana just before she left:

"Get them all in here again at sundown to drink beer."

Mamiekwa gave a hurried glance around to make sure she was not being watched by any one, and then, instead of going to the forest, darted into the hut occupied by Mahlokoza and her family.

Huts of the larger class generally have four poles fixed in the ground and extending to the roof close to the wall on the side

opposite the door. These poles are connected by horizontal pieces of wood, across which wattles are laid. Rude shelving, generally in two tiers, is thus formed, and upon the shelves are kept skins, mats, bundles of dried rushes, and other bulky articles. In the hut occupied by Mahlokoza the upper shelf was piled high with rolls of matting. Mamiekwa nimbly climbed up and lay down amongst these, which effectually concealed her. Here she lay perfectly still, and hardly venturing to breathe.

After some little time, Songoza, Mahlokoza, and Philip came in. Mahlokoza said to Philip:

"Sit at the door where you can see outside, so that no one can creep up to listen. That owl-face Mamiekwa is always sneaking near, and I am sure Dogolwana suspects."

Philip went and sat right in the doorway, and every now and then looked out to either side.

"Is it settled that it is to happen to-morrow night?" asked Songoza.

"Yes," replied Philip; "and I shall stay here to see that all is arranged. I must try and dispose of Mamiekwa. If I can manage it, I will get her to sleep in the hut too."

Bit by bit the horrible conspiracy was unfolded. In the middle of the following night, the door of Dogolwana's hut was to be fastened from the outside, and then the hut was to be burnt with its inmates. Songoza particularly wished the thing to be done in his absence, but Philip, whilst agreeing to fasten the door some time after the inmates had gone to sleep, insisted that Songoza's should be the hand to apply the fire. Philip knew Songoza well, and did not desire to run the risk of being made a scapegoat.

The day seemed very long to Mamiekwa stretched amongst the mats, and it was with a keen sense of relief that she heard at sundown the voice of old Dogolwana at the door saying that a pot of beer of a fresh brew, which had risen splendidly, was waiting to be discussed, and that they must be sure and bring the children to have some of it. Shortly afterwards every one else left the hut, so she came down from her shelf. After ascertaining that the coast was clear, she ran along the pathway at the back of the kraal, and darted into the forest, whence she emerged in a few moments, carrying some "mootie" (medicine) roots which she had dug out, scraped, and hidden on the previous day.

That night she communicated what she had heard to old Dogolwana, his wife, and Notemba, and then under the influence of black wrath and despair, a counter-plot, equally appalling, was hatched.

THE VENGEANCE

Next morning Songoza took a friendly farewell, saying that he was going away on a three days' visit. Late in the afternoon, Mahlokoza went to the forest to collect fuel, and her two boys went down to the field to gather sticks of "imfe" (sweet reed). Old Dogolwana had been plying Philip heavily with beer, and consequently the latter was somewhat mellow. When the coast was clear, Mamiekwa, to whom Philip had been making love all day, brought him an earthen pot of beer, over the edge of which the pink foam was temptingly protruding. She lifted the pot for him to drink from, and as he stretched forth his head, old Dogolwana struck him a violent blow behind the ear with a knobbed stick, and he fell to the ground, stunned. Dogolwana and the two women then bound his hands and feet securely with thongs which they had in readi-

ness. They then lashed him firmly to a heavy loose pole which was lying in the hut, passing the thongs round and round his body and the pole together, so firmly that he could hardly writhe. They then fastened a gag in his mouth. Just as they had finished, he regained consciousness, and glared at them like the trapped animal that he was. A blanket was tied loosely over his head, and he was than left to his own reflections.

Upon the return of Mahlokoza with the load of fuel she was treated in exactly the same way in her own hut. After dark she was carried into the other hut and laid alongside Philip. The two boys had been easily secured on their return from the field. They were trussed and gagged in the same manner, and laid on the ground between their mother and uncle.

The door of the hut was then securely fastened by lacing a strand of soft copper wire through the wicker-work, and round stout poles placed across the entrance, after the manner agreed upon by the conspirators, as overheard by Mamiekwa.

Old Dogolwana, his wife, and Notemba, with little Gqomisa, Mamiekwa, and her baby moved into the hut which Mahlokoza had

occupied. Little Gqomisa had been kept out of the way whilst the terrible preparations described had been carried out.

The huts at the "great place" were arranged in the form of a large crescent, with the cattle kraal midway between the points. The old chief's hut had been in the middle of the curve. After his death, old Dogolwana had taken possession of the huts near the right-hand point. Those huts towards the middle of the curve were uninhabited, being used as corn stores. Thus, no one dwelt nearer to the hut where the wretched victims lay bound awaiting their doom than the women and boys occupying the huts at the left-hand point, beyond the cattle kraal.

As soon as darkness fell, old Dogolwana and the women barred the door of the hut which they occupied securely on the inside, and sat in grim silence awaiting developments. Dogolwana sat listening close to the wicker door. After waiting thus for some hours he heard stealthy footsteps approaching, and then some one endeavoured to open the door. Then Songoza whispered :

"Philip—Philip, open—it is I."

The women snored loudly and Dogolwana sat mute and rigid. After calling Philip's

name several times in a low voice, and obtaining no answer, Songoza crept away. Going softly to the door of the other hut, he examined the fastenings, which satisfied him that Philip had performed his share of the contract. He then stole away on tip-toe until he reached the other side of the hut in which Dogolwana was. Then he sat down and pulled out a flint, steel, and tinder-box.

Old Dogolwana and the women could hear the low click, click of the steel on the flint through the "wattle and daub" wall of the hut.

The touchwood soon ignited, so Songoza placed it in the curve of a doubled wisp of dry grass, and then he ran quickly over to the hut which contained his brother, his wife, and his two sons, one being the only creature that had ever awakened a spark of love in his cold and cruel heart.

The wisp of grass quickly ignited, and with it Songoza ran around the hut, firing the overhanging eaves every few feet. He then rushed into the forest. The hut was old and as dry as tinder. The roaring flames shot up instantly, and within a quarter of an hour the glowing roof sank down with a thud between the blazing walls.

About an hour afterwards Dogolwana again heard some one trying to open the door.

"Who is there?" he called out, his voice sounding muffled through the blanket which he had drawn over his head.

"Open the door, Philip; it is I, Songoza."

"My chief," replied Dogolwana; "Philip, with your wife and children, is sleeping in the next hut on the left."

Songoza gave one frightful shriek, and rushed forth as if driven by fiends.

GQUMA;

Or, THE WHITE WAIF

"A sun-child whiter than the whitest snows
Was born out of the world of sunless things
That round the round earth flows and ebbs and flows!"

Thalassius.

I

THE fish had been biting splendidly since midnight, and when at dawn we ran the boat into a little creek which branched from the main lagoon between steep, shelving, rocky banks overhung with forest, we counted out eleven "kabeljouws," the lightest of which must have weighed fifteen pounds, while the heaviest would certainly have turned the scale at fifty.

We laid them out, 'Nqalatè and I, on the smooth, cool rock shelves. The fish more recently caught were yet quivering, and the lovely pink and purple flushes still chased each other along their shining sides. 'Nqalatè,

like all Kafirs, hated having to touch fish; he regarded them as water-snakes with a bad smell superimposed upon the ordinary ophidian disadvantages. After cleansing the "kabeljouws" under my directions, he washed and re-washed his hands with great vigour; but, to judge by the expression of his face when he smelt them afterwards, the result of the scrubbing was not satisfactory.

The morning was cool and bracing, and a wonderful breeze streamed in over the bar at the mouth of the lagoon, where the great ocean-rollers were thundering. A flock of wild geese arose and flew inland after their night's feeding, uttering wild screams of delight as they soared into the sunlight, which had not yet descended upon us. Seamews and curlews wheeled around with plaintive cries. A couple of ospreys swooped down and settled on a giant euphorbia only a few yards off. Ever and anon vivid halcyons skimmed down the creek. In the forest close at hand the bush-bucks were hoarsely barking, and the guinea-fowls uttering strident cries.

While my companion collected fuel, I took the kettle and forced my way through the bush to the bed of the creek at a spot above

the reach of the salt water. On returning I found 'Nqalatè blowing at the fire as only a Kafir can. Lifting his head out of the smoke, he gave a sneeze, and immediately afterwards uttered the exclamation: "Gquma 'ndincede!" This struck me as peculiar. "Gquma," pronounced "g (click) o-o-ma," means in the Kafir language, "a roar," such as the roar of a lion, or of the sea; in this instance I took it to mean the latter, and "'ndincede" means "help me," or "give assistance." After speculating upon this strange rudimentary suggestion of the widespread habit according to which divers races of men invoke their respective deities or deified ancestors after the innocuous process of sneezing, my curiosity as to how the roar of the sea came to be invoked in an apparently analogous sense prompted me to question 'Nqalatè on the subject.

"Gquma, whom I invoked," he replied, "is not the roar of the sea, but a woman of your race who lived many years ago, and whom we, the Tshomanè, look upon as the head of our tribe. You will notice that whenever a Tshmanè sneezes he calls on Gquma."

"But where did Gquma come from?" I inquired, "and why was she so called?"

"Gquma," replied 'Nqalatè, "was a white woman who came out of the sea when she was a child. She married our great chief 'Ndepa, and she and he together ruled our tribe. She was the great-grandmother of our chief Dalasilè, who died last year."

The tide was running out swiftly, and I waited impatiently for it to turn, so that I could re-commence fishing. The sun was now high, and the breeze had died down to a gentle, fragrant breath. Suddenly the water ceased running, and began to sway troublously backward and forward, lapping loudly against the rocks. Then the tide turned, up it came rushing—this strange, cold, pure, bitter spirit pulsating with the ocean's strenuous life. Like a singing bird it was vocal with wonderful words that no man may understand; with joyful tidings from its habitations in the sea's most secret places were its murmurs thrilling.

We cast off the boat and let her drift with the current until a good anchorage was reached. Fishing usually affords large opportunities for reflection or conversation, and on this occasion 'Nqalatè related to me all he knew about Gquma, and, moreover, gave reference to certain old men of the

tribe, by whom the narrative was subsequently amplified.

II

One autumn morning early in the eighteenth century, some people of the Tshomanè clan, then occupying that portion of the coast-country of what is now Pondoland, which lies immediately to the north-east of the mouth of the Umtati river, were astonished by an unwonted spectacle. The wind had been blowing strongly from the south-east for several days previously, and the sea was running high. Just outside the fringe of breakers an immense "thing" was rolling about helplessly in the ocean swell. This "thing" looked like a great fish, such as on rare occasions had been stranded in the neighbourhood, but it had a flat top from which thick, irregular stumps, like trunks of trees, protruded. Moreover, long strings and objects resembling immense mats were hanging over the sides and trailing in the water. As the rolling brought the flat surface into view, strange creatures resembling human beings could be seen moving about on it.

Such an object had never been seen or heard of by the oldest man of the tribe. The people assembled in crowds and watched, dumb with astonishment. Then a shudder went through them. A faint cry repeated at regular intervals pierced the booming of the surf, and a white fabric, which swelled out as it arose, was seen to ascend the tallest of the protruding stumps. The breeze was now blowing lightly off the land.

All day long the monster lay wallowing. The trailing ropes and sails were cut away, and the great East Indiaman, impelled shoreward by the swell, was just able for a time to maintain her distance from the land. The current sucked her slowly southward, and the crowd of natives silently followed along the shore. Late in the afternoon the breeze died down, and the doomed vessel rolled nearer and nearer the black rocks. Just after sundown she struck with a crashing thud, and thereupon a long wail of agony arose from those on board. Then she heeled over somewhat, and it soon appeared as though she were melting away in the water. By the time night fell, strange objects which the people feared to touch had begun to wash up; these were stranded by the receding

tide. Nevertheless, the outline of the dark hull could still be faintly seen when the startled people withdrew to their homes, where they talked until far into the night, over the wonderful and unprecedented events of the day.

At the first streak of dawn the people began to re-assemble on the beach. The vessel was no longer to be seen, but the strand was strewn with wreckage of every description, a quantity of which had been flung high and dry by the waves. When the sun arose the people gained confidence and scattered about examining the different articles, which were distributed over an extent of several hundred yards of beach.

A shout arose, and then a rush was made to a certain spot where, in a wide cleft of the black reef, which was floored with gleaming white sand, a strange object had been discovered. Huddled against the rock on one side of the cleft lay a child, a little white girl with long yellow hair. She was clad in a light-coloured garment of a texture unknown to the natives, and around the upper part of her body were tied a number of discs of a substance resembling soft wood of little weight.

The people crowded around the spot, keeping at a distance of a few yards, and gazed with astonishment at this strange creature cast up by the sea. The night had been mild and the sun was now shining warmly on the pallid child, who was breathing slowly in a swoon-like sleep. At length she opened her eyes, they were of the hue of the sky, a colour never previously seen by any of the spectators in the eyes of a human being.

The gazing crowd increased, some of the people who climbed over the rocks gaining foot-hold on the higher ledges of the steep reef, and gazing eagerly over the heads of the others who were nearer. At length an old man, Gambushe, head councillor to Sango, the chief, stepped forward and lifted the little girl in his arms. She was deathly cold, and when she felt the warmth of the old man's body she clung to him and tried to throw her arms about his neck. This, however, the discs of cork prevented her doing, so Gambushe sate her on his knee, and untied the string by which they were fastened. She then nestled her face against his shoulder. The child appeared to be quite without dread; probably she was accustomed to black faces, but in any case the terrors of

the past night would, for the time being, have dulled her capacity for further fear.

The kraal of Gambushe was situated in a valley behind the adjacent forest-covered sandhills which rose abruptly almost from high-water-mark, and thither he carried the worn-out child, who had fallen asleep on his shoulder. A few of the natives followed him, but the greater number remained on the shore. Their curiosity had now got the better of the dread inspired by the unprecedented events just witnessed, and they began to examine and appropriate flotsam and jetsam from the wreck. Bales, boxes, clothing, and furniture—all things unknown—were eagerly examined. The bales, on being ripped open, were found to contain silk and cotton fabrics, which struck the natives with wonder and delight.

An order was sent by the chief to the effect that all the property salved was to be carried to his "great place," which was situated about five miles away, and thither long lines of laden men, women, and children wended over the sinuous footpaths.

In the afternoon dead bodies began to roll in with the curling surf, and the white, bearded faces of the drowned men struck

the excited natives with fresh terror. All of the Bantu race shrink with the greatest horror from contact with a dead body, so the people drew back and gathered together in affrighted groups, to discuss the strange situation. The wind again blew freshly, and as the sea arose the dead men came in more and more thickly, some with wide-open eyes, and lips parted in a terrifying smile. Faster and faster came the bodies, until the whole beach was strewn with them. Mixed with the bodies of the Europeans were those of a number of Lascars, of whom the crew was probably largely composed.

The people left off removing the wreckage, and sent to the chief for instructions. In the meantime they retired terror-stricken to their homes.

Next morning the chief came down, accompanied by the witch-doctors and soothsayers of the tribe, who, with hardly dissembled dread, passed along the strand from body to body. Then they withdrew for consultation, with ashen-grey faces and trembling limbs.

They came to a unanimous decision, which was communicated to a general meeting of the tribe convened next day at the "great place." The monster that had died on the

rocks amidst the white water, was one of the creatures of the sea sent to bear the little white maiden to the land of the Tshomanè. She, when old enough, was to be the "great wife" of 'Ndepa, the chief's "great son," then a boy of about twelve years of age. She was a daughter of the mighty ones that dwell in the sea,—her marine nature being clearly shown by her long yellow hair, which resembled nothing but sea-weed. All the dead people strewn on the beach had been her slaves; they had now been destroyed because she no longer needed them.

The chief gave an order that no more property should be removed from the beach, and that the things taken before the washing up of the bodies were to be carefully preserved for the use of the white maiden. She had come to the land of the Tshomanè when the sea was raging and thundering against the black rocks, so her name, said the soothsayers, must be called "Gquma,"—"the roar of the sea."

III

In those days the European was quite unknown to the Bantu of South-Eastern Africa. Rumour had vaguely told of the advent of strange men with white, bearded faces, who had conquered the "Amalawu"—the Hottentots—by means of the thunder and lightning, over which they had command. This was, however, regarded simply as one of the many semi-mythical tales which are always current among uncivilized people. Now and then, at long intervals, strange, white-winged monsters had been seen by the Tshomanè gliding over the ocean, but these appearances had been classed with meteors, eclipses of the sun and moon, and other unexplainable phenomena. Among savages the unprecedented does not occasion nearly so much astonishment as among civilized men, for the reason that the former have but a very rudimentary idea of the laws governing cause and effect. Like the early Christians, to whom the miraculous was the normal, savages assign all the many things they do not understand to the category of the magical.

The explanation of the nature and the advent of the little white waif as given by the soothsayers was fully accepted. The fair-skinned, blue-eyed child with the long, shining, yellow locks was looked upon as a gracious gift from the undefined but dreadful powers that rule the world from the realm of the unseen, a creature to be fostered and cherished as a pledge of favour,—to be reverenced as an emanation from something that had its dwelling where the sea and the sky met, and that swayed the destinies of ordinary men from afar, something the less known the more awful. It must be borne in mind that the brandy-seller, the gun-runner, and the loafer had not as yet nearly destroyed all respect on the part of the native for the European.

Little Gquma took with strange kindness to her new surroundings. She must have possessed one of those natures—more common among women than men—which can easily assimilate themselves to new surroundings. She was apparently about seven years of age. She talked freely, but of course her language could not be understood. One word she repeated over and over again—pointing the while to herself: "Bessie,

Bessie." This was supposed to be her name, but the one given by the soothsayers quite superseded it.

Gquma remained at the kraal of Gambushe, whither all the things saved from the wreck had been carried—two large store-huts having been built for their reception. One day when one of the boxes was opened, the child caught sight of a pair of hair-brushes and a large mirror. These she at once seized, bursting into tears at the same time. She carried them away with her, and was soon afterwards seen to place the mirror standing against the side of one of the huts. Then she sat down before it, and began brushing out her long, yellow hair, speaking softly to herself the while. Every day thereafter she spent some time before the mirror, brushing her hair and sometimes weeping. In some of the other boxes other brushes were found, and these were put aside for Gquma's use.

Three white cows had been assigned from the chief's herd for Gquma's support, and soon afterwards a law was enacted in terms of which all pure white calves born in the Tshomanè herds were regarded as "Gquma's cattle," and had to be delivered, when a year

old, at Gambushe's kraal. This tribute was submitted to cheerfully by the people, and it was considered a token of good fortune when a cow gave birth to a white calf. In those days virulent cattle diseases were unknown, and in a few years "Gquma's cattle" had increased to a herd of several hundreds. The fame of "the child of the sea" spread far and wide, and people used to come great distances to see her and her wonderful herd of white cattle.

The property salved from the wreck soon became destroyed by moths and damp, consequent on bad storage. In the course of a few years nothing whatever of the textile fabrics was left. At first some attempt was made to clothe Gquma in garments selected from the salved stores, but these were mostly of an ill fit, and soon she came to prefer the untrammelled nakedness of her little native companions. These always paid her the greatest deference, and acknowledged her authority without question. She quickly picked up the language of the tribe, and she appeared to be perfectly happy in her new surroundings.

In the eighteenth century some of the best ideals of the age of chivalry were realized

among the Bantu tribes of South-Eastern Africa. Battles were fought for honour and not for plunder; in warfare the lives of women and children were respected—prisoners were never put to death, but were held at ransom. After a battle the young men of one side would often send home their shields and spears by the attendant boys, and proceed as honoured guests to the kraals of their late adversaries. It was an age of gentle manners and generous deeds, which withered for ever when the butcher Tshaka turned the land into a shambles.

The uneventful years slipped by, and the white waif grew in stature and beauty. Her favourite ornaments were cowrie and other sea-shells. Being always regarded as the child of the sea, her fondness for bathing was looked upon as appropriate and natural. On the level sandy beach which stretched for miles to the north from the reef on which the ship had been wrecked, the great rollers of the Indian Ocean swept in, thundering, and here on sunny days, Gquma with her body-guard of boys and girls would sport and swim, diving through the combers, and then looking back to see them curl over and dash with a thud on the hard smooth sand.

On summer days, when the sun beat fiercely on the beach, they would spend hours on the banks of one of the many streams that trickled down through the forest, plunging every now and then into some crystal-clear, fern-fringed pool.

In cold weather Gquma wore for clothing a kaross made of otter-skins, which had been tanned to the softness of silk, and sewn together cunningly with strands of sinew by an old refugee from one of the inland tribes, which excel as workers in peltries.

Gquma grew to be a most lovely woman. Her skin had browned to a rich glowing tint, and the healthy, natural life she led developed her form to the highest degree of symmetry. She was never asked or expected to perform labour of any description, the Tshomanè people regarding her as one who should be left to follow her own devices. Those who sent her would show her what it was good that she should do.

The one conventional practice which she continued was the brushing of her hair. Before the wreck she had evidently been taught to take care of her locks, for from the day on which she wept at seeing the hair-brushes and the mirror, she had each night and

morning brushed her hair carefully. At night, before sleeping, she would twist it together, and then coil it around her neck. In the morning when she arose she would shake it out until it fell over her shoulders to below her waist. Gquma's brushing of her hair was looked upon as a sort of rite, and the function was regarded with the deepest respect, more especially as she often wept softly during its performance.

The Tshomanè clan, which is located in the 'Mqanduli district, Tembuland, is now of comparative insignificance, but in the eighteenth century it stood at the head of a tribe of considerable strength and importance. At the advent of Gquma, Sango had been chief for about four years. His "great son" was 'Ndepa, who afterwards became the husband of Gquma. Sango was a man of wisdom, who loved peace, and who kept his clan as much as possible within its own territory. 'Ndepa took after his father in character. He was about five years older than Gquma, and he married her shortly after she arrived at womanhood.

At the marriage feast of Gquma the whole tribe assembled. By advice of the soothsayers the great dance took place at the sea-

shore, and instead of following the custom in terms of which the bride should have been led to her husband's dwelling, Gquma and her maidens stationed themselves midway in the cleft of the black reef, where she had been tenderly delivered by the destroying waves, and thither the bridegroom went to ask his bride of the Ocean. Gifts of meat, milk, and beer were cast into the foam, and the soothsayers read the signs of the murmuring water as propitious to the union.

Within a few years of the marriage Sango died, and 'Ndepa became "great chief"; but Gquma, rather than he, was looked upon as the head of the tribe.

Gquma lived only for about eighteen years after her marriage. She bore to her husband two sons, the eldest of whom was called Begela, and a daughter, who was called Bessie. Begela inherited the chieftainship after the death of his father. During the lifetime of Gquma, 'Ndepa did not take another wife.

Gquma died of a mysterious disorder which baffled the skill of several renowned doctors. She lay almost speechless on her mat for many days, and she became more and more emaciated. Then her mind began to wander,

and her speech was ever of the sea. On the day she died she was, at her own request, carried down to the cleft in the reef. Just before she breathed her last, she called for Bessie, her daughter. The child was brought and placed at her side. The dying mother strove to speak, but was unable to do so. She partly lifted herself, and pointed across the sea with her right hand; then she turned, clasped the child to her bosom, and gave out her life with a long-drawn sigh. In the night a terrible storm arose, and the shore afterwards was found to be strewn with myriads of dead fish.

When the storm subsided, Gquma's body was carried at low tide to the extreme outside verge of the black reef. After being heavily weighted, it was cast into the sea, as also were the hair-brushes and the mirror.

It was noticed that soon after Gquma returned, as all the people believed, to the ocean that had given her birth, good fortune seemed to have departed from the tribe which had acknowledged her as its honoured and beloved chief, and the insignificant remnants of which venerate her memory even at the present unromantic day.

THE TRAMP'S TRAGEDY

"Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine."—*Matthew* vii. 6.

"FROM Durban, sir. Been a matter of three weeks on the road. Left my mate at Kokstad, where he 'listed in the Cape Mounted Rifles. Wouldn't have me because I was half-an-inch too short, and a matter of fifteen years too old.

"Yes, looking for a job now, same as lots of others. You're right, sir, times *is* mortal hard. I tramped all the way down to Durban from Johannesburg. No one, barring a black, can get taken on there now. Twenty years ago this was something of a white man's country;—'tisn't no more.

"Yes, it's my own fault; 'most everything that happens to man is, barring good luck, and that's often sent special by the devil for the sake of what comes afterwards. Drink?

well, *that* of course. When a man has been tramping all day long in the hot sun, and then lies down so tired and blistered that he can't sleep, but lies thinking of the chances he has lost and the things he has done, small blame to him if he buys threepenn'orth of forgetfulness, even if it *is* another nail in his coffin. Another nail! As if any more were wanted. I tell you, sir, most of us tramps are dead and damned long ago, and any parson will tell you that when a man's damned there's no hope for him.

"Drink? all sorts. 'Cape Smoke' is bad, and Natal rum is worse, but of all the brews to rot the inside out of a man, Transvaal brandy takes the cake. But I will say this for it: a bottle goes mortal far. I've seen more than one man killed by a single bottle, through drinking it too quick on an empty stomach. But I'm too tough; that sort of thing won't finish me.

"Let's see. I first took to the road twenty years ago, just after the alluvial petered out at old 'Pilgrim's,'[1] and I've been on it ever since pretty well, except for a few years in the Transvaal when I was working on the

[1] "Pilgrim's Rest," an alluvial gold-field in the north of the Transvaal, rushed in 1873.

Boers' farms before the war, helping them to build. I'm a mason by trade; leastwise I never was in my articles, but I picked it up natural like. I used to get a job that would keep me on a farm sometimes for two or three months, and when I got my money, swag it to the nearest town. Then drunk for a fortnight, and the road again until I'd found another job.

"Well, I suppose 'most every man has something special to look back upon; mine, I never talk about. However, you've given me a good feed and a shake-down, and you don't seem to suspect I'm going to try and steal your spoons or cut your throat, so I don't see why I shouldn't tell you about it; anyhow I'll try. Just let me light my pipe, and then you sit sideways so 's you can't see my face, and I'll be able to talk better.

"It came about this way: me and a mate left 'Pilgrim's' together, meaning to tramp to Kimberley, but of course we had to get work on the road. I was just twenty-four years old, and as strong as a horse. I'd not been drinking long, and you couldn't see by me that I'd ever touched a drop.

"At Lydenburg we met a Dutchman who told us of a farm about two days' journey

away, where there was some building wanting to be done, so for there we started. The place was a little way off our course to the right, but that didn't matter. Well, we reached it on the second day, and we were at once taken on. The Boer wanted a 'lean-to' built, and the bricks and mortar were ready. The man who'd agreed to do the job had hurt his hand and been obliged to go away to a doctor, so the Boer was right glad to see us.

"You know, sir, what life is like on a Boer's farm—coffee and biscuit first thing in the morning, early dinner of meat and pumpkin, and late supper of bread and dripping; lots of coffee, of course, in between. This Boer was a good sort and treated us well. We took the job on as a piece, so we worked hard. We grubbed with the family, listened without understanding a word when the old man read the Bible and prayed, and helped them (leastwise I did) to sing hymns. I soon began to pick up a little of their lingo, learning a few words every day, but my mate didn't know a word of it, and wouldn't learn.

"There were lots of children, mostly small, and a young nephew of the old woman's who

lived in the house. His name was Jacob, and he'd long, black hair and a cock-eye. The two eldest children were boys, and the next one was a girl of twelve. She and I became great chums. She used to come out and sit near where I was at work, asking questions about the bricks and mortar, and teaching me Dutch words. She used to laugh like the dickens at my way of saying them. Often, when visitors came, or when the old woman made coffee between meals, as she did three or four times a day, Hessie (that was her name) would bring me out a cup, and watch me drink it. She didn't like my mate, who was a surly old bear, so she would never bring him any, and if I gave him a swig out of mine, she'd get as mad as cats, and swear she'd never bring me any more.

"Sometimes she'd ask me all about my people, and get me to describe the place I'd come from. To hear me describing Manchester in my Dutch would have made a cow laugh. She'd want to know all sorts of things, whether I'd any sisters, and what they were like, and if I'd a sweetheart, and whether I'd ever come back again to the farm after the job was finished. She always used to call me 'Vellum.'

"Well, the job was finished at last, and me and my mate left the farm with about ten pound each, meaning to go straight to Kimberley. Hessie took on a powerful lot when I said good-bye to her, crying and sobbing. I was very sorry to say good-bye too, and I sent her back a present of a red leather belt with a big steel buckle from Middleburg, where we dossed down the first night after leaving the farm.

"I don't know how it was, but although I met four or five of my old chums, I never touched a drop of drink at Middleburg, and what's more, I didn't want to. My mate wanted to, sure enough, but I wouldn't let him; and to be quite safe we went and slept just outside the town, where we couldn't see the lights in the bars, nor hear the boys shouting.

"Next morning we started for Pretoria, and there we both got on the bend. In a week all our money was spent, and we were then kicked out of the hotel. Next day me and my mate got blaming each other, and it ended in my giving him a most almighty hammering, after which we parted.

"I hung about Pretoria for a while, loafing mostly, and doing odd jobs. Then I got

work in the country again, and when it was finished, went back to Pretoria and drunk out what I'd made. This sort of thing went on for about five years—a few months' work at which I'd earn a bit of money—then a couple of weeks' spree. After this a loaf around looking for jobs and picking up whatever I could get.

"You're right, sir, sometimes I was in very low water. I've lived with the niggers in the locations at the lower end of Pretoria, and I've seen some queer sights. I lay ill in a hut there once for three months, and never had a doctor near me; a woman just physicked me with roots, and did me a power of good. When I got better I swore off drink for the twentieth time, and then, as luck would have it, I dropped on a Dutchman who wanted a house built. He lent me a couple of pound to buy clothes with, and then loaded me up on his wagon and took me to his farm, which was not very far from Middleburg.

"After the job, which took me four months, was finished, instead of going back to Pretoria I thought I'd drop round and see how little Hessie and the others on the farm where I'd got my first job over five years

ago, were getting on. I'd more than twenty pound in my pocket, and as I'd nearly died through spreeing after I was sick a few months back, I made up my mind to keep on the straight, at all events for some little time to come.

"So I bought an old pony and a second-hand saddle from the man I'd been working for, and then I rode into Middleburg, where I got a bran-new rig-out at one of the stores. Next day I went on to Hessie's farm. The old man and the old woman were away visiting, and the children, who were nearly all standing outside, had grown so that I hardly knew one of them. It seemed funny that none of them knew me from a crow.

"I just hitched my horse on to a stake, and went straight up to the front door. Not one of the children had recognized me, so they just lolled about and took no notice, same as Dutch children pretty nigh always does. The door was open, but I knocked, meaning to ask for Hessie, and after I'd seen her and got a cup of coffee, to go back to Middleburg. Just then, after I'd knocked, there came down the passage a tall, strapping young woman with the prettiest face I'd ever seen. She shook hands same as the Dutch

always do with strangers that come on horseback, and asked me to come inside, so inside I came. I sat down on the old 'bank' (sofa) with the straight back and the bottom of crossed thongs, that looked just as if no one had sat on it since I'd left the farm, and then I began to ask the young woman about Hessie. When she heard my voice she gave a start, and then jumped up and called out in her own language: 'Why it's Vellum,' so it turned out to be Hessie after all. She just ran at me, holding out both her hands, and laughing and blushing. Well, in less than no time I was talking to her about all sorts of things, and drinking cups of coffee as hard as ever I could. I could now speak Dutch quite well, but she'd hardly give me a chance to speak at all, being so full of questions, and asking another before I'd had time to answer the one. She was a wonderful pretty girl—very plump, with brown eyes and hair, and rosy cheeks. I'd never have known her again. She kept saying she wondered how it was she'd not known me, and then she'd get quite sad like, and say she thought I looked terrible old, and asked me if I'd had lots of trouble. I said yes, and then she pressed me to tell her what my

trouble was. I told her a long yarn about my father and mother having died, and myself having been laid up for three months with fever (which was my name for the 'rats,' and worse). I felt so bad at deceiving her, that I was sorry I'd come back. All at once she jumped up and ran out of the room. When she returned her cheeks were very red, and her eyes bright. After a while I noticed that she had put on the belt I'd sent her long ago as a good-bye gift, and then that it was still nearly new. Then she called in her brothers and sisters, and we all shook hands, and they made me welcome all round.

"Well, she made me off-saddle my horse, and would hear of nothing but that I must stay for the night. It was just a piece of luck my finding any one at the farm, because the old man was preparing to shift to another farm up near Lydenburg, which he had bought. That evening we sat up late in the 'voorhuis' (parlour), and talked to one another long after every one else had gone to bed. Hessie told me all about herself, how she had missed me, and how she used to wonder where I was, and whether we'd ever meet again.

"I lay that night, not in the little outside

room that I'd used before, but in the big strangers' room, where there was a four-poster with a feather-bed so thick and soft that a bigger man than me might have got lost in it. Will you believe me, sir, when I tell you that I didn't sleep a wink? I just lay awake thinking of the life I'd been leading and the things I'd done, and feeling as if I'd made everything I touched dirty. Then the way I'd had to lie to the girl made me feel so hot that I'd to kick off all the blankets, and that ashamed, that if I'd known where to find my saddle and bridle I'd have stole out and cleared.

"Next day the old man and the old woman turned up, and right glad they were to see me, too. They said I must stay on for a spell. Then the old man remembered that he wanted some building done at the other farm, so he asked me to go there with them and take on another job. This I agreed to do, and Hessie was that glad, her eyes just danced.

"In about a fortnight's time we packed the wagons and started for the new farm, which lay in the mountains about fifteen miles, just as the crow flies, to the westward of Lydenburg. We reached there in four days,

and I began building at once with bricks from some old walls which we broke down. There was a sort of a shanty already standing, but the old man wanted a bran-new house put up, and I took on the contract to do the mason work, assisted by his boys. What with brick-burning and laying the foundation, it promised to be a six months' job.

"I just lived with the family like in the old days, only friendlier. Hessie could not do enough for me, and talked and went on with me just like she used to as a child. By and by this young woman's fondness began to make me feel queer. I was very fond of her, too, but a bit afraid of her at the same time; she was so mortal good and innocent, and the worst of it was she believed me to be the same. Many's the time I've been sorrowful for days together through thinking of my past life, and wishing it had been different. Supposing I'd kept on the straight those five years, I might perhaps have put by enough money to buy a little farm, and then have married Hessie; for the old man liked me and would, I'm pretty sure, have helped us with some stock. These thoughts used to worry me more and more; it was just terrible to think of the chance I'd lost.

And then the girl got fonder and fonder of me, and used to look sad when I'd keep out of her way, as I often did for two or three days at a spell.

"No, I never once thought of trying, as you say, 'to live down the past,' and marry her. You see, I couldn't. There were good reasons against it. I've not told you half about the life I led those five years. Drink alone was enough. I knew that sometimes when the thirst for lush took me, nothing on earth would keep me from drinking. Once I went to Lydenburg where I was not known, and stayed a week just because I felt I must go on the bend. I was drunk on the quiet for three days in a back room of the hotel, and then I stayed four days sober before returning, so as to let the signs work off. But there was worse than the drink. . . .

"After I'd been on the farm about six months, young Jacob, the old woman's nephew, turned up. He had been away down colony for nearly a year. Jacob had grown into a long, thin, slouching galoot with a yellow face and a live-long-day scowl. His squint made him seem to be always looking round the corner. He, it turned out, had asked Hessie to marry him just before I'd

come back, and she'd not said no, nor yet yes, to him; but just that she wanted to wait a bit, and that she'd see when he returned from the colony. I soon saw that Jacob was hot spoons on Hessie, and dreadful jealous of me. For a while I enjoyed making him mad, but when I saw how bad he looked I got sorry for him, and tried to avoid the girl. Then *she* began to look miserable, and, I can't tell you, what with one thing and another, I didn't just know where I was.

"One day, just about a month before I expected the job to be finished, I was standing by myself working at pointing the foundation, when who should come round the corner but Hessie. She sat down on a stone close by. 'Vellum,' says she, 'Jacob has again been asking me to marry him, and I've told him I won't.' 'But,' says I, 'why don't you marry him, Hessie? he's got a good farm, and I'm sure he's fond enough of you.'

"When I'd begun speaking I'd my face towards my work, and just when I stopped I turned to look at Hessie. She was leaning forward with her mouth half-open and her cheeks pale. For a while she didn't speak. Then she gave a gulp and said, breathing hard: 'Oh, Vellum, is it you who

says that to me?' I felt that sorry, I could have cut my throat. I knew now that I loved the girl as I'd never loved any one else, and here she was offering herself to me and I couldn't take the gift. I cursed my own folly again only hotter, and what with one thought and another, I clean forgot for a few moments where I was, and that Hessie was there.

"When I looked round again Hessie was still staring at me, and then the thought came to tell her a lie which would hurt a bit at first, but do her good in the end. So I just said in a sort of jokey way: 'Why, Hessie, if I weren't a married man I'd think you were in love with me.'

"At that she gave a start and another gulp and said: 'Are you truly a married man, Vellum?' Well, thinks I, it's no use turning back now, so I said: 'Yes, Hessie; didn't you know I've been married four years, and that my wife has gone to stay with her people at Potchefstrom?' At this she just stood up, and walked away.

"Well, thinks I to myself, the sooner I'm out of this the better; but of course I couldn't leave before my job was finished. I saw very little of Hessie now except at table.

She went about very pale, and never once looked me in the eye, for which I was very thankful. Not many days after our talk, the old man told me she'd promised to marry Jacob, who, all the same, seemed to scowl worse than ever, and looked as mean as a rotten banana.

"As bad luck would have it, no sooner was my contract finished than the war with the English broke out. Then Lydenburg was in a state of siege, so I couldn't get away. After a while a lot of Boers trecked on to the farm, and formed a 'laager' there. Then a commandant came from near Pretoria, and took charge. This happened to be a man who'd often enough seen me blind drunk in the streets between my spells of work. I'd done a job for him, too, and he'd humbugged me out of two pound ten. I felt sure he'd told my old man all about me, but beyond looking a bit strange for a day or two, it made no difference in him or in the old woman —they were just as kind as ever. But all the other Boers looked very sour at me, and would never answer when I'd speak to them.

"Jacob had a cousin who was a parson—and the dead spit of him—right down to the squint and the scowl. He was what they

called a 'dopper,'[1] which means in parsons one who sings very slowly, and speaks through his nose. This chap came one Sunday and preached to the Boers. His sermon was all about some folks called the Amalekites, and a chap called Agag, and that the Lord's chosen people must hew to pieces all folks who weren't chosen. He also told them they were to be careful of spies, and he talked a lot about wolves in sheep's clothing. I was a long way off, but he ramped and shouted so loud, I could hear it all.

"Next day the old man told me on the quiet that I was suspected of being a spy, and that my life was in danger. I told him this was ridiculous, because I'd been on the farm for months before the war began, and had no friends outside the 'laager.' He said he knew this, but that all the others were against me, and I must be careful.

"A couple of days after this the old man told me I'd have to clear out without further delay, because all the other Boers hated me like poison, and they meant to try me by court-martial for being a spy, and perhaps shoot me. He said that Jacob would take me away on horseback that night, and then

[1] "Dopper" a South African Calvinist.

I could lie by during the following day, and make my way to the English lines at Lydenburg when it got dark again. Just after midnight we were to creep away to a bush where our horses would be tied, and ride on from there. The old man gave me twenty-five pounds, which was all the money he had by him, and said he would send me the balance when the war was over, and I'd given him my address.

"That night I went into my room, and pretended to go to bed as usual. I just put my few little things together, and then I blew out the candle and sat waiting in the dark, feeling very lonesome and uneasy.

"By and by I heard a light tap at the door, so I opened it, and there I found Hessie with a Hottentot servant-girl named Griet, who used to wash my clothes. They came in on tip-toe, shut the door, and then Hessie drew me to one side and whispered very softly: 'Vellum,' says she, 'you must do what I tell you now, quickly, and ask no questions.' 'All right, Hessie,' says I, 'what am I to do?' 'You must go into that corner of the room and take off all your clothes, and I will do the same in the opposite one. Then Griet will bring yours to me and

mine to you, which you must put on. Do this at once, and then I will tell you the rest.'

"I could tell from the girl's way of speaking that she was very much in earnest, so without saying anything I just went into the corner and took off my clothes. In a few moments Griet carried them away, and brought me Hessie's, which I put on. They fitted me quite well.

"Just then Hessie stepped out of her corner and came to me in the dark. 'Now, Vellum,' says she, 'just go with Griet, and when she tells you, steal out of the "laager" and follow her. Then walk as quickly as you can along the Lydenburg road until daybreak, when you must hide in the bush until night comes again. From there you can easily reach the Lydenburg "laager" before next morning.'

"She then took my two hands and pressed them very hard. 'Vellum,' says she, 'we will never meet again; think kindly of me, for I love you very dearly.' She then let go my hands, and put her arms around my neck. 'Good-bye, Vellum,' says she, 'give that to your wife when you see her,' and then she gave me a long, loving kiss. Then

she and Griet left the room together, before I'd been able to say a word.

"Now that I knew I'd never see Hessie again, I felt more knocked of a heap than I'd ever felt in my life, and hot with shame at the lie I'd let her go away believing. I sat in the room and waited for about an hour, feeling quite queer in Hessie's clothes, and liking to feel that what now touched me had touched her that was so good, and wondering whether, if I escaped, I'd have the grit in me to try and be a better man for her sake. I had a big 'cappie' on, which quite covered my face. I kept wondering why the plan for getting me away had been changed; but I guessed Hessie had some good reason for what she'd done.

"Then Griet came in and told me to follow her quickly. We went out by the front door. She was barefoot, and I just in my socks, and carrying my boots. We crept round the house in the shadow of the wall, and stole down the garden, which was long and narrow, with quince hedges on each side. We crossed a stream of water at the other end, and then walked quickly up the hill opposite, until we came to the road, along which we went as hard as we could. Then

I wanted to put on my boots, so we turned a bit out of the road, and sat down under a bush.

"Griet then said she'd go back, so I gave her half-a-sovereign for herself, and my kind love and thanks to take to Hessie. Griet told me I was to listen for a horse's footsteps, and when I heard this, to take cover until the horseman had passed. Griet then said 'Good-bye, Boss,' and we shook hands, and she went back.

"I walked along the road as quick as I could, and after going for about a quarter of an hour I heard a shot far ahead. This gave me a bit of a start, but I knew there was nothing for it but to keep my ears and eyes open, and go straight on, so straight on I went.

"Soon after this, I heard the sound of horses' feet coming on in front, so I just went a few yards out of the road, and lay down among some rocks. In a few minutes a man rode past leading a horse by the bridle. This was Jacob, and he was laughing to himself quite loud. After passing me by a few yards, he stopped and dismounted. Then he let go the horse he had been leading, and gave it a heavy kick in the stomach. The

horse just trotted away a few yards and began to feed. Jacob mounted again and rode on, still laughing. I tried to think what all this meant, but it got over me altogether. The last thing I heard of him was his laugh. What made it so queer was that I'd never heard him laugh before.

"After Jacob had got well past I went over to the horse, which was still feeding, and found it was my old moke, ready saddled-up. Here, thinks I, is a bit of luck; so I got on him and rode away, taking it easy, for I knew I could not reach Lydenburg that night, and I meant just to overhaul a gully full of scrub that I knew of about ten miles ahead, and where I could lie by next day.

"As I was going slowly along, my old horse began to cock his ears and snort, and then he gave a shy that nearly threw me out of the saddle. I looked, and saw something lying just at the side of the road. It was not a very dark night; there was no moon, but the stars could be seen every now and then through the flying scud. Seeing that the thing lay quite still, I got off to look more closely at it. I found it was a dead body. . . . I at once thought of the shot and of Jacob's laugh. I noticed a big slouch hat lying

alongside, which somehow reminded me of my own.

"I laid my hand on the body, and found that it was quite warm. I felt farther and found . . . My God! . . . It was Hessie! . . .

* * * * *

"She was quite dead, shot from behind through the back and chest. . . . I was standing in a puddle of her blood. . . . I saw it all now. That damnable scoundrel Jacob had brought her out here and shot her, thinking it was me. She had found out his meaning in offering to take me away, and come and died in my place. . . .

* * * * *

"So now you can see, sir, why it is of no use your talking to me of 'turning over a new leaf,' and 'leading a different life.' I'm sick and tired of everything, and I'll be a drunken tramp until I die in a ditch.

* * * * *

"When the war was over I went back to look for Jacob and kill him at sight. But the devil had got the best of me. Jacob's neck had been broken by the capsizing of a wagon. . . . I often hear that laugh of his. . . . Some day I'll hear it in hell."

THE SEED OF THE CHURCH

"The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church."
TERTULLIAN.

I

MATSHAKA sat on a stone on the highest south-eastern spur of the Intsiza Mountain, just overlooking the Rodè Wesleyan Mission Station, one Sunday morning in the month of November 1880, and listened to the faint throbbing of the church bell. Beyond the mission, the broken hills of Pondoland, divided by the winding Umzimvubu—"the river of the sea-cows"—stretched away towards the ocean until they merged with the sky in an opaline haze. Around the Intsiza and on the surrounding mountain ranges the air was clear; and the distant features of the landscape looked unnaturally near—an almost certain sign of imminent rain.

It was the season of thunder-storms. The sun beat fiercely into the glowing valleys,

but on the mountain-tops the air was cool. Already the heavy cumulus clouds were curdling over the distant Drakensberg, and raising their white and shining masses over the near Xomlenzi range. In the course of a few hours they would unite and sweep over valley and mountain, with shoutings of thunder and wind, and volleys of lightning, hail, and rain.

Along the almost invisible footpaths the people could be seen approaching the church from many directions. They suggested ants slowly creeping to a nest. Matshaka looked at them and thought deeply. The light breeze that almost invariably streams for hours against an approaching thunder-storm carried to his ear the clear notes of the bell. The beats grouped themselves in sets of three: what was the bell trying to say? It seemed as if a word were being repeated over and over again in the ringing. At length he found it—"Intsiza, Intsiza, Intsiza;" that was the word. "Intsiza" in the Kafir language means "refuge." The mountain was so called on account of its broken and involuted valleys which, in the oft-recurring inter-tribal wars between the Pondos, the Bacas, and the Xesibes, afforded a refuge to

the vanquished. And now the church bell tolled out the word so clearly that Matshaka wondered how the thing could ever have puzzled him—"Intsiza, Intsiza, Intsiza."

Matshaka was a Pondo. A heathen and a polygamist, he had lived his fifty years without a single aspiration towards anything better than the surrounding savage conditions afforded him. A man of strong character, he had amassed considerable wealth, and attained to an influential position in his clan. From where he sat listening to the bell he could see a large herd of his cattle grazing in the valley below his kraal, which was situated about four miles from the Rodè Mission.

Pondoland, like every state under savage rule, was the scene of cruelty, oppression, and misgovernment in most forms. Exposed to the unchecked rapacity of the chiefs, the unhappy people were always in danger of death, or confiscation of their property upon some puerile pretext. The one quality which was of advantage to its possessor was cunning. Frugality and industry resulted in the amassing of wealth, and wealth excited the envy and cupidity of the rulers, who, through the agency of the witch-doctor, were never

at a loss for a pretext for "eating up" the owner. Courage availed little, for what could one do against numbers? Honesty would have been ridiculously out of place; conspicuous ability minus cunning would have excited sure and fatal jealousy. Cunning combined with force of character generally enabled a man to die a natural death—even though rich; provided, of course, that he had been judiciously liberal in the right quarters, and had consistently supported the strong against the weak.

Matshaka had used strength and cunning, had used them unscrupulously, and prospered accordingly. Throughout his long life he had stood on the side of the oppressor, and shared the spoil of the oppressed. The words "right" and "wrong" had, practically speaking, no meaning for him. But quite recently, something like the first faint glimmerings of a moral sense awoke in his soul. The glaring and palpable frauds of the witch-doctor had never deceived him, his intellect was too acute and his temperament too reasonable. Lately, a vague and undefined sense of general dissatisfaction with his surroundings had gradually grown, and after this developed the conviction that everything

he knew, himself included, was utterly and hopelessly bad. Thereafter the "beer-drink" knew him no more, he held aloof from the "eating up," which had been his favourite and profitable diversion, and he begun to shun his fellow-men. Soon he became an object of suspicion.

Matshaka sat on the mountain-top and looked at the church far below him. It was built on a spur which ran out abruptly from the lower zone of the Intsiza. The bell had ceased ringing, but the beats still kept sounding in his head. Intsiza—Refuge. Yes, the mission was at least a refuge for those fortunate enough to escape from the dreadful "smelling out," a sanctuary which had always been respected. He had, on the previous Sunday, attended church for the first time in his life, and what he heard there increased his dissatisfaction and unrest tenfold. He could not have told what it was that impelled him to go. He had, of course, often heard accounts of what was taught in churches, but the idea of an omnipotent God coming into the world in the semblance of a poor and insignificant member of a despised class, had always appeared to him as ridiculous. The son of God going out mightily

to war with a blood-red banner streaming over him would have seemed appropriate to his conception of deity, but meekness and submission as attributes of Godhead were too preposterous.

Yet some of the things he had heard on the previous Sunday stuck in his memory. "Come unto Me, all ye who labour and are heavily laden," impressed him particularly. He himself was one of the heavily laden; who and where was the God that gave relief to such? Matshaka sat thinking over this until long after the service was over, and he was still thinking of it when the faint beats of the bell, which was now sounding for afternoon service, fell upon his tense ear. As if in answer to his unspoken questions the wind swept up the one clear word: "Intsiza, Intsiza, Intsiza."

The sun suddenly darkened, and, glancing to the westward, Matshaka saw the great bulging thunder-clouds sweeping up in a serried mass. He arose and quickly descended the mountain. He reached his dwelling just as the storm broke.

II

The germ of unrest planted in the congenial soil of Matshaka's mind grew and branched until it filled and dominated the man's whole being. The result was a condition of hyper-æsthesia. He seemed to be more alive than formerly; things previously unnoticed forced themselves on his attention and became significant with mysterious meanings. Everything in his environment hurt him. His wives were mere animals that he had purchased for his pleasure and use, his sons and daughters were mere savages without his force of intellect. He had hitherto held aloof from all who were Christians, and had strenuously opposed the missionaries. Now, however, he felt a pressing need for intellectual and spiritual communion, but there was not a living soul in the whole circle of his acquaintance with whom he felt he could speak of what was torturing him. His thoughts seemed to focus themselves upon the missionary at the Rodè, but he could not make up his mind to speak. What he really needed was some one to explain to him his own mental and spiritual condition,

a talker rather than a listener. His longings were quite undefined, and their object utterly unintelligible even to himself; had one asked him as to the nature of his trouble he could hardly have even guessed at its nature.

During the week of suffering following the Sunday spent upon the Intsiza, one idea continually haunted Matshaka, the idea of becoming a Christian. When first this presented itself the notion was summarily dismissed, but it kept persistently recurring. Public opinion is probably a more potent coercive among savages than among civilized men, and for an intellectual savage with Matshaka's antecedents to turn his back on the traditions of a life-time, and cleave publicly to what his fellows held in contemptuous scorn, involved consequences that might well appal the bravest.

Next Sunday, however, found Matshaka at the Rodè Church. When he arrived there were not more than a dozen persons in the building. It was a rainy day, and the congregation was consequently small. He took his seat right at the back, in one of the corners, and from there watched the dripping worshippers as they arrived one by one. An old man named Langabuya especially

attracted his attention. This man had been "smelt out" for witchcraft some seven or eight years previously, and Matshaka had assisted at his "eating up." He had managed to gain the sanctuary of the mission, and thus to save his life. He had been a rich man, almost as rich as Matshaka, but all his possessions had been taken. Now he lived at the mission, his sole substance, as Matshaka knew, being a few goats. Yet he looked contented with his lot, and at peace with all men.

The service began with a hymn sung by the congregation. The natives are natural musicians, and they easily acquire the faculty of part-singing. The harmony seemed to intensify the discord and unrest of Matshaka's troubled spirit; all the events of his turbulent life seemed to crowd in on his mind as the past is said to overwhelm the consciousness of a drowning man.

The hymn over, a prayer was said by the minister, but it made no impression on Matshaka; the ideas were pitched in a key to which his mind could not yet vibrate. After the prayer another hymn was sung, and then the minister opened the Bible and said he was going to read the Word of God. This

statement set Matshaka's mind on the alert; now he would hear the very words spoken by the majestic and all-powerful God to the men He had made. It was with an almost sick feeling of disappointment the forlorn man soon learnt that the words being spoken were not those of the God towards whom his spirit was passionately stretching forth its hands, but of one of His many prophets, who were, after all, only men.

The chapter happened to be the second in the Epistle of Paul to the Colossians. Matshaka listened to the sentences read by the minister in a sonorous voice and with excellent execution, and presently felt an unfamiliar stir within him. When the minister reached the thirteenth verse: "And you, being dead in your sins, and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses," something seemed to transfix the heart and then the brain of the desolate man sitting in the corner of the church, with bent head, and face hidden in his hands.

Then happened to Matshaka what happened to Saul of Tarsus when on the road to Damascus: a great light from Heaven shone round about him. This was succeeded

by a darkness as of death. Then the scales fell from his eyes, and he saw with a blinding clearness of vision. That strange new birth, that awakening of the soul which transfigures those who genuinely experience it, was his; let those doubt it who may, this experience is the great *fact* in some lives. Its existence is ignored by many, denied by a few, and explained satisfactorily by none. The Christian explanation is partly vitiated by attributing it solely to Christian influences; the fact being that it was well known in ancient times amongst Pagan nations. Moreover it is in these days realized by many to whom Christianity, in some of its most important aspects, is a book sealed with adamant. The materialistic attempt at an explanation is quite untenable. Conversion, the conviction of sin, the awakening to a higher life, that thunder-trump which separates the many goats from the few sheep of our past, and summons the soul to that seat of agony from which it can and must discern good from evil, without speciousness or self-deception, is as real and fundamentally natural as the earthquake, and as tremendous in its effects.

Matshaka broke into a passion of sobs

which he vainly strove to stifle. At the conclusion of the reading the minister came down the aisle, and kneeling next to the penitent, besought the Lord to save this sinner, whose spirit was broken and whose pride lay in the dust. The congregation prayed silently in unison, not one turned his head to look. They well knew what was happening; most of the elder members had undergone a similar experience.

A short time elapsed and then Matshaka's sobs ceased. When the ordinary service proceeded he became quite calm. After its close, the minister met the penitent, took him by the hand, and led him apart. It was eventually settled that he was to attend regularly for instruction each day at the mission, before being formally received as a church member.

When Matshaka left the mission for his home the rain had cleared off; the steep, green slopes of the Intsiza shone in the sunlight, and foaming cataracts shot down the gleaming crags. In his eyes was a new-born light, and his heart was the home of a virginal peace from whose gentle face the spirits of wrath had fled away—never to return.

III

Probably no more villainous and unmitigated fraud than the Kafir "isanuse" or witch-doctor cumbers the earth. Pretending to the faculty of divination, he trains his powers of observation and memory to an extraordinary extent. Every trivial circumstance coming within the sphere of his cognizance is hoarded with a view to future use, and by means of spies he is kept informed of all going on among the people of his clan. Rich and influential men are, of course, the objects of his keenest regard. Nothing is too unimportant to claim his attention. The pattern of a snuff-box, a dent in an assegai handle or blade, the number of cowrie shells in a necklet or armlet—all facts of this description are noted with the view to possible use against the owner, should it be advisable to convict him of practising black magic. Such facts can be used in this way, for instance: if a man be accused of causing any one's illness or death, it is very useful to be able to say—"You took the assegai with the crack in the handle that you mended with the sinew of a she-goat last spring, dug a hole

with it in front of the sick man's hut, and buried therein" (whatever the particular supposed magical substance may be). This knowledge of detail fills the spectators with awe at the witch-doctor's powers of divination. All the friends of the accused know that he possesses an assegai mended in the manner described, and they at once feel that he is guilty.

Superimposed upon all this fraud is a growth of self-deception; no doubt many of these wretches believe themselves to be possessed of magical powers.

When a witch-doctor is consulted, a present, such as an ox, a sheep, or a goat—according to the rank and wealth of the person seeking his advice—is always brought.

Such person, with his friends, sits down in front of the witch-doctor's hut. Having already been advised by a spy of the probability of such a visit being made, the witch-doctor—after asserting his dignity by keeping his visitors waiting for a suitable period—comes forward, and without any greeting, states to the startled strangers the object of their visit.

Those consulting a witch-doctor are bound by custom to "vuma," or acknowledge the

truth of every statement he makes, whether it be true or false. Thus, supposing a child to be ill, and the parents to have come to consult the witch-doctor as to who has bewitched it—for all illness is assumed to be caused by "umtagati," or witchcraft—the witch-doctor might say: "You, Sogolima" (or whoever it may be), "have come to find out who it is that has bewitched your child that is ill." At once all would clap their hands loudly, and call out "Siyavuma," which means, "we acknowledge." A false statement is sometimes purposely made. For instance, in the case we are supposing, the witch-doctor might say next: "It is a girl that is sick," whereas as a matter of fact it is a boy. The audience would, nevertheless, cry out "Siyavuma," but involuntarily; the exclamation would not be so loud, nor would the hand-clap be so energetic as if a true statement had been made. Then the witch-doctor would say: "No, you are lying; it is not a girl that is sick, but a boy." Then "Siyavuma" would break forth with a loud shout, and all would be struck with terror at the wonderful powers of the "isanuse."

Usually the witch-doctor takes his cue from the chief as to the selection of victims.

Women practise this horrible trade rather more often than men.

Whilst it was yet early morning of the Sunday following that upon which Matshaka had attended church, and floated away from his past life on a flood of penitent tears, small bodies of men could be seen trooping over the hills from every direction towards the kraal of Nomaduma, priestess and witch-doctor, renowned over the whole country-side for skill in occult arts. Her dwelling was situated at the foot of a conical hill which rose abruptly for about six hundred feet, and ended in a bare, rocky point, fringed close to its summit with large, loose boulders. This hill is known as the "Bonxa," a word which means the breast of a woman, in some of the northern Bantu dialects. It is a striking object in the landscape, and has been the scene of many a horrible tragedy. All wizards detected anywhere in the neighbourhood were dragged thither for execution.

An hour after sunrise several hundred men had assembled, and fresh arrivals happened every few moments. The men were ranged in the form of a crescent along the hill-side, and facing the witch-doctor's hut. A larger party than usual approached. This consisted

of the chief Makanda with his councillors and other attendants. They took up a position midway between the central portion of the crescent-shaped crowd and the "isanuse's" dwelling. Here they sat down and waited in silence.

All the men bore arms when they came. Some had guns, many had spears and assegais, and a few carried clubs, "amabunguza." All the weapons, however, had been placed together in an empty hut about forty yards to the right of that occupied by Nomaduma. The sun shone fiercely from a cloudless sky, and not a breath of wind could be felt. The men sat absolutely mute and motionless.

About half-an-hour after the arrival of the chief, the wicker door of the hut was drawn suddenly aside, and Nomaduma, the "isanuse," appeared. She was a tall, slender woman of about forty-five years of age. Her features were emaciated, and her hair drawn out into innumerable long locks, which were stiffened with grease and red clay. Her eyes were bright, and her cruel lips, partially withdrawn, showed her dazzlingly white teeth, which were beautifully small and even. Her only garment was a robe of tanned calf-skin, which was draped around her waist and hips. En-

circling her body, under her thin and pendent breasts, was a girdle made of the dried skins of snakes, twisted together. From her neck depended a number of pieces of bone, fragments of dried and polished wood of different sorts, and various little skin bags. But the most striking element of her attire was the innumerable dry, inflated gall-bladders which were fastened all over her in bunches and festoons. These were the gall-bladders of sheep and goats, some hundreds of which are an essential part of the witch-doctor's paraphernalia.

When Nomaduma appeared, a low murmur, which lasted for a few seconds, arose, and then dead silence reigned. She stood erect and gazed fixedly at the sun ; then she turned slowly towards the gibbous moon which was sinking in the west. She appeared to affect being unaware of the presence of the chief and his crowd of followers. Moving very slowly, she took a few paces towards where Makanda was sitting, and then she paused, closing her eyes and throwing her head back, as her body and limbs stiffened. After a silence of a few minutes, and without changing her posture, she spoke :

"The chief has come to seek my help

against the false friends who seek to do him evil."

From hundreds of eager throats the one word "Siyavuma" burst out in a great shout, to the accompaniment of a simultaneous clap from the same number of pairs of hands. Dead silence immediately followed, and after a short pause Nomaduma continued:

"The chief was about to go forth to attack his enemies." (Here she made a sweep with her hand to southward, the direction in which the Cwera country lay.)

"SIYAVUMA."

"The chief bade his 'war-doctor' (inyanga) prepare the pot of magic medicines and place it on the roof of his hut, so that the spirits of his fathers (imishologu), that dwell in the unseen, might make his men brave and his enemies faint-hearted."

"SIYAVUMA."

"In the darkness of the night the stealthy steps of the traitor approached. Then his perfidious hands bore away the pot, which he afterwards gave with the potent medicines of the war-doctor to a messenger sent to receive it by the enemy."

"SIYAVUMA."

"When the spirits of his fathers came to

the chief's hut, and found that the medicines were gone, they departed in anger, thinking that the chief and his tribe held them in contempt."

"SIYAVUMA."

"Those who wish evil to the chief are few, but they are crafty. Two men only are guilty in this matter, one bore the pot of medicines away, and the other afterwards delivered it to the messenger of the enemy."

"SIYAVUMA."

"These traitors were incited to this deed by greed, they having been promised large rewards by the enemy for their treachery."

"SIYAVUMA."

"The wicked ones have called themselves the friends of the chief, and they were trusted by him; one of them is present, but the other has feared to come before my face."

There was no shout of "Siyavuma" at this, but a deep and confused murmur arose among the men. It seemed to swell and break and shrink, and then to wander backwards and forwards and up and down the curving lines of the crescent, as if endowed with volition. It was like an evil spirit seeking a victim to destroy. Each man looked at his neighbour with shrinking distrust, and tried to draw

away from contact with a possible wizard. At length the shuddering sound died, and a tense and terrible silence reigned.

Nomaduma stamped with her foot on the ground, and a girl who looked to be about twelve or thirteen years of age ran out of the hut carrying a heavy stabbing spear with a broad and gleaming blade. This she handed to the witch-doctor, and then she ran back to the hut. Nomaduma took the spear and advanced slowly to where Makanda and his councillors were sitting. She paused when close before the chief, and said:

"At your right hand sits your councillor Rolobani; he and Matshaka, who has joined the Christians, are the guilty men."

Rolobani started to his feet, his eye-balls starting from his head, and his face ashen-grey. He tried to speak, but could only gasp for breath. His companions fell away in every direction to avoid the contamination of his touch.

The crescent broke up in disorder, the men surrounding the doomed wretch in a furious, surging crowd. Nomaduma held up the spear, its head glinting brightly in the sunshine, and again dead silence fell on the throng. She then walked up to Rolobani

and seized the necklet of charms which he wore, after the manner of most natives. This she dragged from his neck, and held out at arm's length.

"In the pot of medicines prepared by the war-doctor for the chief, was the dried head of a water-snake; the war-doctor is present; let him declare if I speak the truth or not."

The war-doctor called out from amongst the crowd that this statement was true.

"Look. I open this bag which I have taken from Rolobani's neck, and in it find the thing I have named. He stole it out of the pot which he sold to the Cwera chief."

Here she held up the shrivelled snake's head, so that it could be seen by all.

This was accepted as proof positive, in the face of which, had any man dared to lift his voice in favour of the doomed but guiltless victim, he would probably have been killed as an accomplice. The unhappy Rolobani again tried to speak, but his voice was drowned in shouts of rage. In a few moments his hands were bound behind his back, and he was led away by two men, each holding a thong which was noosed around his neck.

Rolobani was dragged towards the Bonxa

hill, followed by the furious crowd. On the least appearance of faltering he was freely prodded behind with spears, and by the time he reached the commencement of the steep ascent, he was streaming with blood. Then a frenzy seized him and he bounded forward, climbing over the rocks on his abrupt course so fast that he tugged at the thongs by which he was held prisoner. He knew he had to die at the top of the hill, and his only anxiety now was to get it over as quickly as possible. Consequently, he and the two men holding him got some considerable distance ahead, and reached the bare summit of the hill some seconds before the nearest of the crowd which straggled after them. Among the boulders forming the fringe gleamed white bones, and a shapeless horror, emitting a dreadful stench lay huddled in a cleft at the prisoner's feet. As the men arrived one by one, they gradually formed a ring around the doomed wretch whose last hour had so nearly sped; their black, sinister, relentless countenances shining with the sweat that poured plentifully from them.

Rolobani was a man whose bravery had been proved in many a tribal fight. The terrible accusation of witchcraft combined

with foul treachery had broken down his courage for a little space, but now he was his own man again, and, in the strength of his conscious innocence, could look steadily into the eyes of death. He glanced round the ring of angry faces contemptuously, and then stood stolidly awaiting his certain doom. After a short pause a man stole out from the circle armed with a heavily knobbed club, and struck him from behind a violent, smashing blow on the head. He fell forward on his face, and in a few moments was beaten into a shapeless mass.

Matshaka had not been bidden to the gathering at Nomaduma's kraal. He was, however, aware of such through overhearing a conversation between two of his sons. His conversion to Christianity had been a fruitful topic among the Pondos during the previous week; at every "beer-drink" it had been discussed. His name became a by-word among the heathen, a shaking of the head among the people.

As the men passed his kraal on their way to the witch-doctor's they shouted derisive

and insulting words at him. His former friends had cut him dead in the public ways. All this was no more than he expected; he had helped to make others suffer what he now endured, and he felt that he deserved it.

When he thought of the future it seemed to be one mass of difficulties, not the least of which was presented by his four wives. His chief wife, old Nolenti, had been neglected by him for years past. He now determined to marry her according to Christian rites, and to send the other three back to their respective homes. He tried to explain this to Nolenti, but utterly failed to make her understand him. She was quite satisfied with her position of chief wife, and her consequent immunity from labour in the fields. It was, he felt, his appointed task to endeavour to make her see and appreciate the truth which illuminated his enfranchised spirit. His three eldest sons had married and were established in kraals of their own. They spent most of their days in going from beer-drink to beer-drink, leaving their wives to hoe in the fields. Several of his elder daughters were also married. His younger sons lounged about the huts all day, their only occupation being the herding of

cattle, and keeping the calves away from the cows until milking-time. His younger daughters played, naked and unashamed, about the kraal, except when fetching fuel from the forest on the Intsiza, or scaring the long-tailed finches from the crops. He felt he must try and save the souls of his children ; how to begin, that was the question. He was as much an object of suspicion among them as among strangers. He read distrust in every eye. Even at his own kraal, if a few were gathered together and he approached, silence fell upon all, and they would nervously disperse if he joined them.

And now, on this Sunday morning, Matshaka experienced his first revulsion of feeling against his new belief. Was it true, after all ? He could hardly have told what it was that he believed in. How large the difficulties loomed ! how bitter were the sufferings he was enduring ! how the future lowered and threatened ! Matshaka was naturally a sociable man, and the ostracism to which he was subjected caused him acute pain.

Musing miserably on all these things, he walked slowly towards the comb of the ridge about two miles from his kraal and in the

direction of the Rodè. From this ridge the church could be seen by looking diagonally across a long, shallow, grassy valley. This was the day on which he was to have been formally received into the church as a member. Now his courage failed him, and he determined to postpone the matter, at all events for another week.

As he reached the top of the ridge, the sound of the bell came floating and quivering up through the limpid air. Being much nearer the church, the ringing sounded more clear and distinct in his ear than on the morning he had spent upon the mountain.

Away to the left, and distant about five miles, the upper half of the Bonxa hill could be clearly seen projecting over an intervening ridge. Matshaka could see the swarm of men around the summit; he knew by experience what that indicated, and a shudder went through him. He sat watching until he saw the crowd break up, descend slowly, and disappear behind the ridge.

The bell rang on, and again Matshaka saw the little knots of people moving in towards the church, like ants towards a nest. Then, suddenly, the doubter recovered his faith. His soul again became flooded with light.

He bent his head and wept, partly with shame at his recent doubts, but mostly with relief and joy at the recovering of his faith.

He arose after a while and moved towards the church. After walking a few yards he recollected that he was wearing nothing but his blanket. He did not wish to enter the church unless properly clothed, so he sat down again, his brain reeling with the crowd of thoughts that hurtled through it, and his ears filled with the music of the mission bell.

Glancing to the left, Matshaka noticed a party of about thirty men coming along the footpath which led towards his kraal over the saddle where he was sitting. These men came from the direction of the Bonxa. Wishing to avoid them, Matshaka arose and walked slowly forward in the direction of the Rodè. Looking around again after a few moments, he saw to his surprise that the men had left the path, and were apparently endeavouring to intercept him. He quickened his pace, and they began to run. In an instant he saw what had happened: he had been "smelt out," and this was the killing party sent to put him to a cruel death.

The instinctive love of life surged up in Matshaka, and he bounded forward in the direction of the church where, like Adonijah, he might catch hold on the horns of the altar. Matshaka well knew that the church was held to be an inviolable sanctuary even by the chiefs most rabid in their hatred of supposed wizards. He had himself helped to hunt a fugitive along the same course under similar circumstances, and had angrily grumbled when the man eluded his clutches.

But Matshaka was an elderly man, whilst several of his pursuers were young and in the prime of their strength. They did not succeed in intercepting him, but as the chase proceeded it could easily be seen that the hunted man was losing ground. He now crossed a shallow valley, the bulging side of which hid the church from view. Running up the hill sorely tried his strengh. Glancing back over his shoulder he could see that the three foremost of his pursuers were rapidly gaining on him.

Just then the bell rang out once more to call the people together to a special class meeting held after the conclusion of the ordinary service. The sound nerved Matshaka to fresh effort. He knew that his time

had come—that he would never gain the sanctuary; so he now strove only to reach the top of the ridge from where the church could be seen. This he just succeeded in doing, and then he turned and faced his pursuers, who were only a few yards behind him. Instinctively he had thus far carried his knobbed stick; this he now flung away over the heads of his three enemies, lest he should be tempted to use it.

In a few seconds Matshaka was surrounded by a ring of implacable foes.

He stood as still as his panting would permit, with folded arms, and gazed fixedly at the church. He was quite naked, having long since flung away his blanket in the course of the pursuit. The bell had now ceased ringing, and the minister with his congregation stood bare-headed at the side of the building, sadly expectant of the impending tragedy. They knew they dared not interfere.

The leader of the pursuers, a tall, ill-looking man named 'Ndatyana, took a pace forward and said:

"Ha, Matshaka, son and father of wizards, so we have caught you."

"Yes, and I am a dead man. Whatever

I am, my children are guiltless. Give me but a little time to pray ; then do with me what you will, but spare them."

Matshaka knelt down, clasped his hands, closed his eyes, and turned his face upwards to the sky. His lips moved slightly. The men stood around him without sound or movement. After a short pause he stood up, folded his arms, looked straight into the eyes of 'Ndatyana, and said :

"I am ready."

For some seconds no one moved. Then, at a nod from the leader, one stepped forward and struck Matshaka a violent blow on the head with a club. He fell heavily to the ground, and in a few seconds all was over.

The little congregation went back into the church, and soon the strains of a hymn arose. When this had ceased, the minister offered up a fervent prayer to the Lord that He might show mercy and forgiveness to those who thus ignorantly slew His servants.

By this time 'Ndatyana and his men were out of sight, so the male members of the congregation, headed by the minister, who carried a large white sheet, wended slowly to where the body lay. Then with reverent hands they lifted it from the ground and bore

it into the church. They laid it, bleeding, in front of the little communion table at which they had so recently celebrated the Lord's Supper.

And every one there knew it to be an acceptable offering.

LITTLE TOBÈ

"It wastes me more
Than were't my picture fashioned out of wax,
Stuck with a magic needle, and then buried
In some foul dunghill."—*The Duchess of Malfy.*

I

FOR nearly two years after Madilenda came to the kraal of Sikulumè as his third wife, she was fairly happy, Mamagobatyana, the "great wife," was neither jealous nor exacting; she was fat and lazy, and took her highest enjoyment in sleeping in the hot sunshine on the lee-side of the hut. Nozika, the second wife, had apparently been selected by her spouse for her muscle; she was extremely stupid and not particularly well-favoured, but powerfully built, and equal to any amount of hard work in the fields.

Madilenda was of a type somewhat uncommon among native women. She was light in colour, with finely-formed features

and very prominent eyes. Her figure was the perfection of symmetry. According to European taste she was very pretty indeed, but the ordinary native would have preferred a woman somewhat larger built, and generally of a coarser type.

Near the end of the first year her baby,—"Little Tobè,"—was born, and then for a time she was perfectly happy. The baby came just at the end of spring. During the previous four months she had not been expected to work, and she had a nice long rest to look forward to before the hoeing of the maize and millet fields would commence.

Sikulumè was a man whom every one found it easy to get on with, and he made in every respect a capital husband. He was kind to his wives, and they were very fond of him. He was rich, and the skin bags and calabashes at his kraal were full of milk. Winter and summer, food was plentiful, work was easy, and the three wives were not jealous of each other. Truly, Madilenda's lines were cast in comparatively pleasant places.

Sikulumè's kraal was situated in a deep valley through which one of the tributaries of the Kenira river runs. He was a Hlubi Kafir. Living in one of the territories

administered by the Government of the Cape Colony, he had nothing to fear from the rapacity of the chief, or the malice of the witch-doctor.

Little Tobè grew rapidly both in stature and intelligence. His father was fond and proud of him, and his mother not only thought, but knew him to be the finest baby in the world. She fastened charms around his neck, the seeds of the "rhiza" to keep away convulsions, and a piece of "mooti" or medicinal wood as a preventive against illness generally. Besides these, Madilenda's father gave her the tooth of a leopard, which she hung next to the "mooti" for the purpose of making her boy brave.

Mamagobatyana, the "great wife," was very clever as a maker of mats. She used to send her daughters down to the banks of the Kenira river in the autumn, before the grass-fires swept over the country, to collect green rushes—of which they brought back great bundles. Of these rushes she would construct mats which, for excellence of workmanship, were renowned throughout the district. As soon as she had three or four mats completed she would take them up to the trader at the Mandilini, and dis-

pose of them, obtaining sugar, bright-coloured handkerchiefs, brass ornaments, and beads in exchange.

One day, when little Tobè was about a year old, Mamagobatyana returned from the trader's, laden with treasures. She had carried up and disposed of an unusually large number of mats, and with the proceeds had purchased, amongst other things, twelve yards of print of a particularly striking pattern and hue. With this she meant to have a dress made. She had never yet worn such a garment, but a woman from a mission station, who was visiting her relations at a neighbouring kraal, was wearing a dress made of similar material. This woman was of about Mamagobatyana's age and build, and the sight of her dress had kindled in Mamagobatyana's soul a strong desire to possess a similar garment. Thus when she saw the material at the trader's she at once purchased sufficient for her purpose. The other woman happened to be in the shop at the same time, and she agreed to cut out and make the dress for a reasonable remuneration. Mamagobatyana, however, was so proud of her purchase that she could not bear to relinquish the material to the modiste before

exhibiting it to Madilenda and Nozika, so she tied it up in a bundle, placed it under her arm, and bore it away in triumph to her kraal.

The day was cold, and most of the people were indoors warming their hands at the little fires lit in the centre of the different huts. Around these fires men, women, and children crouched on their hams, keeping their heads as low as possible, so as to be out of the upper stratum of thick smoke, which was sharply defined from the lower zone, about a yard thick, of quite clear air. When you enter a Kafir hut in which there is a fire, you must always keep your head low, or else you will be stifled. The greener the wood that happens to be burning is, the denser the smoke and the thicker the smoke-zone will be. Sometimes in damp weather you may have to lie down on the ground to get a breath of clear air, and from within three inches of the tip of the nose through which you are breathing comfortably, you may watch the sharply-defined and undulating under-surface of an opaque cloud of acrid, stinging smoke.

At the kraal of a polygamous Kafir each wife has her own particular hut, which is,

in a very real sense, her castle, and the door of which she can shut against all except her husband; and even against him sometimes. When, however, the wives of a family live on fairly good terms mutually, they often exchange visits, and enjoy a considerable amount of reciprocal friendly intercourse.

On the occasion when Mamagobatyana returned to her kraal, proud in the possession of the twelve yards of print, she found no fire lit in her own hut, her children having gone to the hut of Madilenda, where they were sitting playing with little Tobè. She therefore decided to remain in Madilenda's hut, and there dry her damp blanket and exhibit her purchases, whilst a fire was being lit by her daughters in her own dwelling.

Mamagobatyana was stout and consequently had some difficulty in stooping; more especially after unwonted exercise. When, therefore, she entered the hut through the low doorway, she found her head surrounded by an atmosphere of pungent smoke arising from the combustion of damp sneeze-wood. This made her eyes smart excessively, and caused her to cough and gasp.

She sat down on the ground close to the fire, and handed the parcel containing the

dress material to Madilenda, asking her to open it. This was soon done, and the material, in yard-length folds, was laid out for admiration on a clean mat at the other side of the fire.

Just then Mamagobatyana got another bad fit of coughing. Between her gasps she begged for a drink of water which Madilenda, after placing little Tobè on the ground, went to fetch in a cleft calabash.

Now, little Tobè was an extremely lively child, and was of an inquiring turn of mind. The thing of all others that had a special attraction for him was fire. Repeated burnings and many slaps had not abated this attraction. Whenever left to himself in the vicinity of a fire he would endeavour to seize one of the burning sticks and drag it away to play with. On two occasions he had narrowly avoided setting fire to the hut by this means. On the present occasion, no sooner had his mother left him to himself upon the ground, than he seized from the fire an attractive brand, one end of which was glowing charcoal, and turned to investigate the bright-coloured print which was close at hand.

Madilenda returned with the water, and

saw, to her horror, that Tobè had laid the fire-stick on the print, six or seven folds of which had been already burnt through. She snatched away the fire-brand, and quenched the burning material with the water which she had brought for Mamagobatyana. The dress, of course, was completely ruined. Mamagobatyana broke out into fierce lamentations and tears of rage. She refused to be comforted. In a few moments she went off to her own hut, muttering threats and calling little Tobè all the abusive names she could think of. Little Tobè, much to his astonishment, received from his mother a spanking more severe than any he had previously suffered.

II

About two months after the ruination of Mamagobatyana's dress by little Tobè, measles of a virulent type broke out among the native children, and nearly decimated the kraals. It was not so much the disease itself, as its after effects, that were so fatal. The children usually got over the measles easily enough, but they were allowed directly afterwards to run about naked, no matter how cold the weather might be. Inflammation of

the lungs then often supervened, usually with a fatal result.

Little Tobè got the disease in the first instance in a very mild form, but just at the critical stage of convalescence, very cold, wet weather set in, and he soon developed a bad cough. Soon afterwards he began to pine, and lose his appetite. His eyes became unnaturally large and bright, and he evidently suffered severely from pains in his poor little chest. Sometimes the cough nearly left him, but at the least recurrence of unfavourable weather another violent cold would ensue.

A "gqira" (native doctor) was sent for, and a goat killed for his entertainment. He made an infusion of ashes obtained from burnt roots of different sorts, frogs' feet, baboons' hair, lizards' tails, and other items included in his grotesque pharmacopœia, and with this poor little Tobè was heavily dosed. He then hung some infallible charms tied up in a little skin bag around the invalid's neck by a string made of twisted hairs from the tail of the "ubulunga"[1] cow. Next morning,

[1] When a native woman marries, her husband presents her with a heifer, which is thereupon considered a sacred animal. It may never be slaughtered, under any cir-

after promising a speedy recovery, he departed, taking a fat ox as his fee. But poor little Tobè became worse and worse; his legs and arms that had been so chubby were now mere skinny sticks, and his ribs were sharply defined under the dry, feverish skin of his thorax. When not coughing he wailed almost incessantly, and he hardly ever slept.

Madilenda grew very thin and hollow-eyed herself, and she went her weary way the picture of utter misery. Sikulumè was very much distressed at the poor little boy's plight, and he sent to a distance for another "gqira," a most celebrated practitioner. Upon arriving at the kraal this one required a fat black ox to be killed, with the blood of which he sprinkled every member of Sikulumè's family, poor little Tobè coming in for an extra share.

After speaking in the most slighting terms of the former doctor's treatment, he made a powder of the burnt bones of several kinds of snakes and birds. He then made small

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cumstances, and should it die untimely, such is regarded as a token of evil fortune. The hairs of the tail are thought to have peculiarly protective properties for members of the "house," in respect of illness. This animal is known as the "ubulunga."

incisions with a sharpened stick across the chest, and around the neck, arms, and body of the patient, and into these rubbed the powder. After this he applied a plaster of fresh cow-dung to little Tobè's chest, and then wrapped him up in the skin of the black ox killed on the previous evening. Then he carried him out of the hut and laid him in the middle of the cattle kraal. This occurred at noon, and until sundown the "gqira" danced and chanted around his patient in the most violent and grotesque manner conceivable. Just after sundown he fell down in a kind of fit, foaming at the mouth and yelling horribly, and then appeared to go off into a swoon. When he awoke from this he crawled over to where the poor little child was looking out from among his wraps with wondering eyes, inserted his hands between the folds of the skin, and drew forth a lizard about four inches in length. This he held up to view of the admiring and applauding crowd. Here was the cause of the malady, rid of which the child would at once mend. Madilenda wept tears of joy as she released little Tobè from his unsavoury durance.

The "gqira" left next morning with a reputation more firmly established than ever.

He took with him two of Sikulumè's best cattle.

For about a week after the function described the weather was mild and dry, and little Tobè really appeared to be somewhat better. Unfortunately, however, the improvement did not last. A cold rain set in, and the cough became worse than ever. The mother then grew desperate; she loved the child so passionately that the thought of the possibility of losing him maddened her. The idea that little Tobè had been bewitched had gradually developed in her mind. Among the uncivilized natives, illness, especially in the case of one who is young, is almost always attributed to witchcraft. Some enemy, by means of occult arts, has caused the disease, embodied in a snake, a lizard, or a toad, to enter the body of the sufferer during sleep. The unhappy mother strongly suspected Mamagobatyana of having committed some iniquity of this kind in revenge for the spoiling of her dress. She was confirmed in this idea by an old woman from a neighbouring kraal, who had a spite against Mamagobatyana, and who suggested to Madilenda what she had long been thinking of. As a matter of fact, however, it had been for

some little time whispered throughout the neighbourhood that Mamagobatyana had bewitched little Tobè.

Here and there among the Hlubi kraals are to be found the dwellings of Basuto waifs who have drifted over the Maluti and Drakensberg mountains to find a refuge from deserved punishment or despotic oppression. Among the natives an alien is often believed to be an adept in magic more effective than that practised by their own local tribal doctors, and the sorcery of the Basuto, being associated with the awful, mysterious, and cloudy mountains of his (in parts) almost impenetrable land, is held to be very potent indeed.

Now, an old Basuto, named Lotuba, dwelt high up in the valley in which Sikulumè's kraal was situated. Lotuba was famed far and near for his skill as a wizard. It was believed that he could reveal the secrets of the past as easily as he could foretell the future. His methods were quite different to those practised by the Hlubi witch-doctors, and consisted principally of divining through the medium of the "dolossie" bones. These are the metatarsal and metacarpal bones of sheep, goats, antelopes, and other animals, coloured vari-

ously. Lotuba would sit on a mat, gather up two or three dozen of these bones, shake them up together in the corner of his calf-skin kaross, and then fling them down on the ground after the manner of dice. From the different combinations formed by the bones as they lay on the ground he would read the answer to any question put to him. It was usual for those consulting him to pay a goat as a fee in advance. In this manner he had accumulated considerable wealth.

One night Madilenda asked Sikulumè to let her take a goat from his flock and drive it up to the kraal of Lotuba, whose advice as to little Tobè she wished to ask for. It happened, however, that Sikulumè had reasons of his own for disliking the Basuto doctor, whose kraal, by permission of the chief, was built on what Sikulumè considered to be by right his own particular run of pasturage, so he refused Madilenda's request, telling her rather roughly that he had had enough of doctors. Madilenda heard him in silence. She sat the whole night through, rocking little Tobè in her lap, and trying to soothe his cough.

It was now mid-winter, and when the

frosty dawn glimmered faintly through the latticed door of the hut, the hapless mother arose, wrapped the suffering child warmly in a blanket, stole quietly out, and hurried up the rugged valley towards the dwelling of Lotuba. She had to walk but a little more than a mile, but the road was steep and stony, and she was weak from the effects of long-suffering anxiety and sleeplessness. Besides she was again *enceinte ;* she expected the baby to be born in about two months. Slowly and painfully she climbed her way along the zigzag pathway, sitting down on a stone to rest every now and then. When she reached Lotuba's kraal the sun had just risen. She did not approach the hut at once, but sat down to rest on the sunny side of the stone goat-enclosure. Here she found a spot sheltered from the keen breeze, so she laid little Tobè down gently upon the ground. The child, protected from the raw air by the thick blanket which was loosely laid over his head, slept soundly, being exhausted from the sufferings of the night.

Madilenda then proceeded to divest herself of all her ornaments. She removed her double bracelets and anklets of cowrie shells, and the brass and copper bangles from her

arms and legs. From her throat she untied the necklet of goats' teeth strung on twisted sinew. Around her waist was tied a small bundle ; this she opened, and thus revealed two brightly-coloured cotton handkerchiefs and a small paper packet containing five silver sixpences and four three-penny pieces. The money had been given to her by her husband, coin by coin, out of the proceeds of the hides which she had from time to time carried up to the trader's and sold.

She spread out one of the handkerchiefs and wrapped the other articles loosely in it ; then she lifted the child and walked up the slope to the witch-doctor's hut, in front of which she sat down and waited, trying at the same time to soothe the child, who was now awake, and who wailed pitifully in the intervals between the racking fits of coughing.

After a short time the door of the hut was opened, and Lotuba the witch-doctor appeared. He was an old man, with wizened features and small, bright eyes. His limbs were thin, and he walked with a stoop.

Lotuba stood, wrapped to the throat in a calf-skin kaross, and looked intently at Madilenda, who returned his gaze. After a few moments he re-entered the hut, and

beckoned to her to follow him. He seated himself on a mat just inside the door, and Madilenda knelt down, sitting on her heels, opposite him on the floor.

"Those who seek my advice," he said, "bring something as payment."

For answer Madilenda held out the little bundle tied in the handkerchief. Lotuba took this, opened it deliberately and examined the contents. Then he tied it up again and hung it to one of the wattles of the hut. Suspended from the central pole was a bag made of the skin of a red mountain cat. This Lotuba took down; then he emptied the "dolossie" bones which it contained into one of the corners of the kaross. Taking a double handful of the bones he flung them down with a sweeping throw on the bare, clay floor.

Bending over the bones with the appearance of one calculating deeply, he kept silence for some little time, and then began to speak in a droning, monotonous, sing-song voice:

"The wife of Sikulumè comes in the early morning with her sick child. She has held it to her breast for many days and nights. It eats not. It gets thinner day by day. It

coughs from the rising of the sun to the falling of the darkness, and again until day comes."

Here he gathered up the bones and again flung them to the ground.

"The delight of the child before it got sick, was to play with fire. The 'imishologu' (ancestral spirits) meant the child to be one who would sport with danger."

Here he again gathered up the bones, waved them to and fro, and scattered them on the ground. Madilenda sat gazing with wide eyes. Her features were drawn and set. She held the child, which once more slept, tightly to her bosom. The witch-doctor continued:

"The 'great wife' of Sikulumè had anger against the child in her heart. She dreamt a dream which made her fearful. Then she went to the wise woman of the Vinyanè, who told her that this child would overcome the sons of her house as the autumn fires overcome the grass."

Madilenda sat like a statue with eyes aflame. Lotuba threw the bones again, and continued:

"She told her husband of this, and he too feared for the sons of his 'great house.' In

the night they talked over the matter, and they determined that the child should die, so they buried the magic medicines that draw the poison-lizard to the side of the sleeper, in the floor of the hut of the child's mother. Soon afterwards the child sickened. He will die before the coming of the spring rains, for no skill can save him."

Madilenda waited for no more. She arose, left the hut, and walked down along the pathway by which she had come, clasping little Tobè to her breaking heart.

After walking a few hundred yards she turned abruptly to the right and ran swiftly along another footpath which led over a saddle to the next valley, in which her brother, Galonkulu, dwelt.

III

Sikulumè soon ascertained that Madilenda was at the kraal of Galonkulu, and on the second day of her sojourn there he followed with the intention of persuading her to return to her home. She confronted him with blazing eyes and heaving breast, and bade him begone and never again approach her.

Galonkulu and all the others at his kraal were fully persuaded of the guilt of Mamagobatyana, and they strongly suspected Sikulumè of complicity. He, conscious of his innocence, was thunderstruck at the accusation, the foulest that can be made against a native, and at once withdrew, filled with indignation.

Madilenda and little Tobè were given a hut to live in, and were provided with milk and corn. The poor little child only lived for a week after his removal. One morning, after a night of terrible coughing, he lay very still in his mother's arms. Fearing to disturb him she sat still until she became quite stiff. By and by he grew cold, and when she moved her hand to reach for a blanket to cover him with, his head fell back loosely. He had been dead for a long time whilst she thought he was sleeping.

They dug a grave close to the kraal; a pit was first sunk to a depth of about five feet, and then in the side a little chamber was excavated. In this the emaciated little body, which had grown so long, was laid facing the north. It was wrapped in white calico obtained from the trader, and beneath it was a mat. The opening of the side-chamber

was then walled up, and the grave filled in. The desolate mother would sit for hours on a stone next to the grave-cairn, and weep bitter tears.

The unhappy woman brooded day and night over her sorrow, and, as the time for her confinement approached, she was filled with a fresh dread. She had persuaded herself that Mamagobatyana and her husband had bewitched her unborn child, and that it would die like little Tobè. This delusion preyed upon her mind to such an extent that she became almost insane. The people of the kraal feared and avoided her. They still supplied her with food and left her in possession of the hut, but otherwise neglected her completely. She took to lonely wanderings and often talked to herself. Sikulumè, wroth at the undeserved aspersion cast upon him and his "great wife," did not again come near her, and thus she ate her own heart out in grief, terror, and loneliness.

It was now September, and the spring rains set in with a cold deluge. The Kenira river roared in flood through the rocky gorge below the northern face of the Umgano Mountain.

One morning, the second after the rain had ceased, Madilenda wandered down the valley she dwelt in, to where it joins the river, and then lay down to rest in a sunny nook just below a rocky bluff. The deep-thrilling murmur of the brown flood as it churned along in its winding course soothed her, the warm sunshine brought a sensation of physical comfort which to her weary and debilitated body had long been unknown, and she fell into a deep and dreamless sleep. When she awoke it was late in the afternoon. She tried to rise, but found she was unable to do so. A succession of sharp pains racked her. Her time had come.

One advantage which women of the uncivilized races possess over their European sisters is this, that for them the curse of Eve is lightened to such an extent as to be hardly a curse at all. That ordeal which the artificial life of our race through so many generations has made pathological, is, with the majority of native women, a process so easy that in normal instances little suffering and hardly any danger is entailed. But in Madilenda's case mental agony and bodily fatigue during the terrible months she had just lived through had

lowered her vitality to such an extent that she completely collapsed. The sun went down on her ineffectual pangs; throughout the long, cold, winter's night the stars swept over her anguish.

The sun arose and thawed the thick hoar-frost that had crusted over the shrubs and the grass, and still she lay moaning between frequent swoons. A troop of wild baboons came searching along the mountain-side, turning over the stones in their pursuit of lizards and scorpions; the leader looked at Madilenda where she lay, and darted aside with a startled cough. A jackal slinking home to his burrow after a night of depredation, crept close up to her, looked long and carefully, and then hid amongst the stones near by, awaiting further developments. A wandering vulture made a loop in its course and then swept upwards in a widening circle. Soon afterwards, other vultures, that had read the signal aright, came flocking up from all directions in increasing numbers.

Late in the afternoon exhausted nature made a final effort, and the child was born. The mother fainted immediately and then lay long unconscious. When she again came

to herself she turned with painful difficulty and drew the child to her. It was cold and dead.

So the curse had fallen here as well, as she had expected. A wild indignation surged up in Madilenda and conquered the weakness of death that was stealing over her. The sky seemed to have turned black, and the swirling river blood-red.

A shadow slid over her. She looked up and saw the sweeping vultures which were now rapidly drawing in their spirals over where she lay. She knew what that meant. One of them swooped so close that she felt the wind of its wings, and heard the horrible skur-r-r-r of the pinions. The bird alighted on a stone a few yards off, and began to preen the vermin from its filthy feathers.

Drawing the dead child under her arm, Madilenda crept backwards on her hands and knees in the direction of the river. From the ledge on which she had been lying, a steep slope of about twenty yards, which ended in an abrupt drop of a few feet where the water had undermined the bank, led to the swirling torrent. Down this slope she slowly and painfully crept. When she

reached it, the undermined bank gave way under her, and she dropped like a stone into the water. One dull splash, scarcely to be heard over the growling of the flood, and Madilenda slept in the soft and merciful arms of Death.

THE IMISHOLOGU

"There is no bird in any last year's nest."

I

WHOEVER has traversed the valley of the Umzimvubu river below the Tabankulu Mountain, in that vicinity where the Tsitsa, the Tina, and the Umzimhlava streams have carved their several devious courses almost through the vitals of the earth to the main water-way, has seen the roughest part of Pondoland, and seldom feels inclined to repeat the experience. However, ponies accustomed to such regions will clamber up and down precipices which would make a domestic cat that is only habituated to the house-top of civilization nervous, and accidents on such journeys seldom occur.

It has been my fortune twice to penetrate these rugged regions, an interval of a year elapsing between the expeditions. Hence the following tale.

The season was late autumn. I had made a very early start, and my horses were tired. I decided, therefore, to camp where I was, between the precipice from which I had just escaped and another, equally dangerous, frowning just before me, and which it seemed impossible to avoid. The place was a small, flat ledge upon a rugged tongue of land running from the mountain out to a sheer bluff, under which the river, still slightly swollen from the late summer rains, murmured, hundreds of feet below.

A native kraal consisting of three huts, a stone cattle enclosure, and a small goat-pen made of bushes, stood on the ledge. Two of the huts were occupied by human beings, and the third, ordinarily used as a corn-store, was civilly placed at my disposal by the head of the kraal, an old Pondo named Zwilibanzi. His son, one Madolo, and the latter's wife and two children, were the only other occupants of the kraal.

I was particularly struck by the air of cleanliness and neatness pervading the whole establishment. This was in strong contrast with the condition of the other kraals I had visited. The Pondos are, it may be stated, much dirtier in their habits than are other

natives. Their huts are usually ragged and disorderly on the outside, and as to the interiors—why, the less said about them the better.

The night was cold, so after assisting my after-rider to make the horses as comfortable as circumstances would permit, I entered the hut of Madolo, who, with the old man, was sitting on the ground next to a bright, almost smokeless fire. I then, for the first time, noticed the two children, one boy named Dhlaka, aged about ten years, and the other a little girl aged about six, whose name turned out to be Nodada, a Kafir word meaning "wild duck." The mother was absent, but was momentarily expected to return.

Nodada was a remarkably pretty child. All she wore in the way of clothing was a small apron of strung beads, unless a necklet of charms hung on hairs from the tail of the "ubulunga" cow can be counted as such. She made friends with me at once, although, as her grandfather assured me, she had never previously seen a European. The boy, on the other hand, would not come to terms at all, but crouched on the ground near the door, ready to spring up and flee, as he did whenever I attempted to make advances.

After a short interval, the mother, a good-looking woman of about thirty, arrived. Her name was Nomayeshè. After greeting her husband, her father-in-law, and me (as guest) with politeness and ease, she turned to the children; the evidently genuine affection manifested between her and them was truly remarkable. She sat down on the floor of the hut and they flung themselves upon her. They were immediately clasped to her breast, with many an endearing epithet. I could not help wishing at the time that some of those who believe the Aryan race in South Africa to have a monopoly of the gentler feelings and emotions could have been present. It could easily be seen that the warmest feeling on the part of the mother was for the little girl, who, up to the time when I retired for the night, never left her side.

Next morning, shortly after daybreak, I bade farewell to my kind hosts, and resumed climbing the anything-but-delectable mountains. In pausing to take breath just before passing out of sight of the kraal I looked back, and saw Nomayeshè at the hut door looking after me, and the little girl holding on to her mother's skin skirt.

* * * * *

Within a few days of a year afterwards, I travelled over the same course, but in an opposite direction. I had attempted to reach old Zwilibanzi's, with the view of spending the night there, but when the sun went down, leaving me still several miles away from that spot, I found it necessary to seek shelter at another kraal, where my entertainment was somewhat indifferent. However, I reached Zwilibanzi's next day at about noon. Even from a distance it was apparent that things were changed for the worse in comparison with what I had seen a year previously. The huts looked dilapidated, and there was an atmosphere of dreariness over the whole establishment. I found old Zwilibanzi asleep on a mat on the sunny side of his hut, but could see no sign of another human being.

I wakened the old man, but it was some time before I could bring myself to his remembrance. He was totally blind and extremely deaf, and had aged considerably in every respect. At length he remembered me, and then he seemed extremely pleased.

Where were Madolo, Nomayeshè, and the children? I asked. Alas! Nomayeshè and the little girl Nodada were both dead, Madolo had left the neighbourhood, and the boy

Dhlaka had gone to stay with an uncle at another kraal. Of the happy family I had so often thought of, only this old man remained. A nephew, with his two wives, had come to dwell at the kraal, but I gathered from Zwilibanzi that they were not kind to him, that the nephew was idle, and too much in the habit of going to beer-drinks, and the wives lazy, ill-tempered, and fonder of emptying than of filling the milk-sack and the calabashes.

There was much that was tragic, and some that was sordid, in the old man's tale. What follows is an account of the tragedy.

* * * * *

II

It was just at the merging of autumn and winter; the last of the maize crop was being gathered in, and the first touch of frost was browning the hill-tops. The field cultivated by Zwilibanzi's family lay in a ravine a few hundred yards below the northern side of the ledge on which the kraal was built. Thither Nomayeshè, with another woman who came to assist at the harvesting, went every day for the purpose of stripping what

remained of the maize-cobs from the withered stalks, and carrying what they gathered in baskets up to the kraal. At this work Madolo was not supposed to assist, so he took his departure for the "great place" of the paramount Pondo chief, for the purpose of attending an "umkandhlu," or "meeting for talk," of which general notice had been given.

Early in the afternoon of the second day after Madolo left, there remained little more than two basketfuls of grain to remove, so Nomayeshè, with the other woman and Dhlaka, went down with baskets to fetch it. Some little gleaning had to be done, so they expected to be away, more or less, for the whole afternoon.

The day was cold, and old Zwilibanzi was lying asleep in his hut, where a fire had been lighted. Little Nodada, who was very intelligent for her age, was left behind with instructions to attend to the fire and see that it neither went out nor endangered the hut by blazing too freely. This was an occupation to which she was quite accustomed. Thus, when Nomayeshè and her two companions went to the field, the old man and the child were the only ones left at the kraal.

The cattle were within sight on the hill-side, and the little flock of goats was close at hand. Just before he disappeared over the lip of the ledge, Dhlaka called out to Nodada, asking her to keep her eye on the goats, among which were a few strange ones that might be liable to stray.

The sun was still shining when Nomayeshè returned. She found old Zwilibanzi asleep next to the fireplace, which was quite cold, but little Nodada was missing. At first she felt no alarm, but rather anger at the child's disobedience in thus absenting herself, but after the sun sank behind the 'Ngwemnyama Mountain, and the child was still absent, she began to feel uneasy. When the shades of night began to darken over the valley she became alarmed, and began searching all around the edge of the plateau, calling loudly the child's name. The woman, her assistant in the harvesting, helped in the search. Up and down the stony gullies, among the narrow rock fissures, below the precipice with which the ledge where the kraal was built ended, the frantic mother and her companion sought with flaming brands throughout the greater part of the long, cold night, but no trace of the child could they find.

The kraal nearest to that of Zwilibanzi was about three miles away, and thither Nomayeshè hurried some time before daybreak, upon her companion's suggestion that the child might have taken refuge there. At this kraal, however, nothing could be heard of her. When day broke all the men, women, and children turned out and scoured the country. The alarm was wailed out to all the surrounding kraals, and the inhabitants of these joined in the search. When the all too short day drew towards its close, little Nodada was still missing. The hills resounded with the shouts of the seekers, and dwellers in the more distant valleys, flocking in to see what was the matter, had swelled the number of the searchers to a considerable crowd. But all in vain. The sun again sank, and night descended from an untarnished sky of throbbing stars, and the poor little child was still lost in the maze of bare, frowning peak and yawning chasm.

The unhappy mother was now nearly insane. Throughout the whole day she had never rested for a moment, and since the previous noon she had not tasted food. When darkness fell and the seekers returned to their homes, she kindled a large fire on

a stony ridge just above the kraal, and all night long she wandered about carrying firebrands, and calling the name of her lost Nodada into the cold ear of the night that mocked her with wild echoes.

Daylight found the searchers again at work, but the experience of the second day was only a repetition of that of the first. Late in the afternoon Nomayeshè fell exhausted to the ground, and was carried senseless to her dwelling. Then the searchers again wended sadly homewards, feeling that further effort would be vain.

III

The kraal of 'Ndondo was built in a particularly inaccessible part of the valley of the Umzimhlava, and about seven miles from the dwelling of Zwilibanzi. Here, on the second day after the disappearance of little Nodada, was held a small and select gathering. A fat ox had been slaughtered for the occasion, and the pink foam of beer was visible over the lips of several large earthen pots, some of them nearly three feet high.

'Ndondo was related to the heads of several

important kraals in the neighbourhood, to which he had only very recently returned. He had, a few years previously, been "smelt out" upon an accusation of having, by means of black magic, caused the death of one of the wives of his chief. Luckily, however, he had got wind of the matter in time, and accordingly had managed to escape—not alone with his life, but with the bulk of his cattle—to the Cwera country. His alleged confederate had not been so lucky. This unhappy man had been tortured to death, his kraal had been destroyed, and all his property confiscated.

Subsequently, however, 'Ndondo, by means of judicious bribery, had managed to convince the chief of his innocence, and had accordingly been permitted to return, as it were, on probation of good behaviour. He was rich in cattle, and was now celebrated for generosity and hospitality to the "isanuse" and "inyanga" fraternities, members of which were generally to be found at his kraal.

On the present occasion, no less than four witch-doctors—one a most celebrated man, a very Matthew Hopkins among witch-finders—were present, the occasion being an attempt to cure one of 'Ndondo's daughters of what

was really epilepsy, but which was supposed to be an attack of "umdhlemnyana," or "love frenzy," believed to have been induced by a young man of the neighbourhood by means of the casting a love spell.

It was about mid-day. Long strips of roasted meat were circulating among the feasters, and the beer, which was of a very heavy brew, was being handed round freely in small pots, each with a cleft-calabash spoon floating in it. Then one of the boys who had been herding cattle on the mountain side rushed in, breathless, and told a strange tale. He had, so he said, been seeking honey in a steep gorge, the entrance to which was visible from the kraal, when he heard cries, as of a child, issuing from beneath a large flat stone. The gorge was not far off, and thither the feasters wended, some gazing back ruefully at the liquor and the baked meats.

They reached the flat stone ; it was evidently part of an old land-slip, and lay as a sort of bridge across the bottom of the gorge. On each side the ground was flush with the top. Below it were piled stones which had been carried over by æons of floods, and above it boulders, too heavy to admit of their being moved by water over the obstacle, had lodged.

Among these were a few crevices, this being probably due to a general shifting of the whole mass under exceptionally violent pressure of water from above.

All the men listened carefully, but at first nothing could be heard. The boy, however, was evidently in earnest over his tale, so they all sat down and waited. Sure enough after a few moments they heard a faint wail issuing from under the stone. Here was a portent which the witch-doctors welcomed as something coming specially within their province, and towards an explanation of which they alone could give a clue.

The most celebrated witch-doctor was asked his opinion. He did not give an opinion; he gave a full and positive explanation of the case. There was, he said, undoubtedly a child under the stone, but it had been placed there by the "imishologu," or spirits of the earth, and under no circumstances whatever should it be interfered with so long as it was in their august charge. The "imishologu" might, of course, be asked in some appropriate and orthodox manner to deliver the child back to the light of day, but any attempt to violate their domain would certainly be followed by severe punishment.

The three other witch-doctors at once declared that they had each independently arrived at exactly the same conclusion.

Upon being asked as to what form the request to the "imishologu" should take, the most celebrated witch-doctor claimed to have had it as a direct personal communication from some most potent spirits of this class, that the sounds most delectable to their shadowy ears were those caused by the trampling hoofs and clashing horns of cattle, the lowing of which was also grateful to them, but in a minor degree. He, the witch-doctor, therefore recommended that the cattle be collected and driven round and over the spot, so that haply thereby might the earth-spirits be propitiated to the extent of permitting the imprisoned child to return to the light of day. So the boys, of whom several were present, were sent to collect the cattle on the mountain-side, and drive them down the gorge for the appeasing of the "imishologu."

All this time the pitiful wail of a little child who was dying in the cold and darkness could be heard coming at intervals from under the stone, which had lain through immemorial ages, not more deaf to pity, or

more senseless, than the fraud and superstition of man.

The cattle were not far off, so within a short time the lowing herd was hurried down the gorge by the shouting boys. The men then formed a ring about a hundred yards in diameter, the flat stone being in the centre, and in this circle the cattle were driven round and round, the animals being crowded together so that their horns might clash, and beaten with sticks to make them low and bellow loudly. This went on for some time; until, in fact, the afternoon was well spent. Then the cattle were driven away, and the witch-doctors, jointly and severally, shouted down the crevices leading under the rock, conjuring the "imishologu" to permit the imprisoned child to return to the light of day.

But, perchance, the "imishologu" slept, like Baal of old. They gave no answer, nor did the child come forth. When the sun went down the men returned to 'Ndondo's kraal, and resumed their feasting.

Next morning one of the minor witch-doctors stated that he had, on a former occasion, been told by some "imishologu," in a vision, that the light pattering of the hoofs, the varying bleat, and the rank smell

of goats were things that pleased them. After consultation it was decided to try the experiment of propitiation by means of goats, where the cattle had failed. The most celebrated witch-doctor, whilst admitting the possibility of some result from the goat function, gave it as his opinion that as the "imishologu" had remained obdurate in spite of the cattle function, they would not now relent.

The witch-doctors again went up the gorge to the flat stone, the goats being driven after them by the people of the kraal. They bent over the cleft and listened carefully. After a while a faint moaning could be distinctly heard. Then the goats were hurried in, made to crowd over the stone, and to rush backward and forward. This went on until nearly noon, when the flock of goats was driven away.

A most solemn invocation of the "imishologu" followed this, but they were still unappeased. The child did not come forth, nor could any sounds now be heard issuing from under the stone. Perhaps Death had at length shown mercy.

The most celebrated witch-doctor now apparently became epileptic, and soon fell into a trance. Upon awaking, he claimed

to have been in spiritual communication with the "imishologu." The child had, he declared, been taken by the spirits of the earth, but was being well treated, and was, in fact, much happier than it ever had been before. It was now playing in the wonderful underground fields where the sun never scorched nor wind chilled, with numerous companions. It would never more suffer hunger, thirst, nor any other pain. It was so happy that it did not wish to return to the regions of day and night. Much of this may, after all, have been true.

IV

After Nomayeshè had been carried down to her hut on the afternoon of the second day of the search for her lost child, she lay long unconscious, and when she awoke, it was to raging delirium, which lasted until late in the night, when sleep suddenly overcame her.

Next morning, just after sunrise, she opened her eyes, and lay for a long time wondering as to what had happened. At length she remembered, and with a cry she started up for the purpose of going forth again to search.

She staggered out of the hut, only to fall helplessly to the ground before the doorway. Several women from the nearest kraals had come to tend her, and these tried to persuade her of the uselessness of further search. Tears came to her relief, and she became calmer. At length she was persuaded to drink a little milk, after which she sank to the floor in a stone-like sleep. When she awoke, it was nearly noon.

It happened just about this time that Dhlaka, who had been out herding the flock of goats, returned to the kraal with strange news. In the veldt he had foregathered with other boys, who told him that a child had been heard crying under a stone near the kraal of 'Ndondo.

When this was communicated to Nomayeshè, she uttered one wild cry in which hope and agony were blended, and rushed forth. Her weakness had disappeared, and she climbed the steep, stony hills so fast that the two women who started with her were soon labouring on with heavy pantings, some distance behind. The seven miles she had to travel led her through many a tangled thicket, and along many a dizzy ledge with frowning buttresses above, and sheer preci-

pices yawning beneath. She plunged into dark ravines, in the depths of which the light of day was almost lost, and scaled narrow, knife-back ridges so steep that hands as well as feet had to be used by the climber.

Nomayeshè reached the kraal of 'Ndondo alone, about the middle of the afternoon, and probably two hours after the return of the party from the scene of their unsuccessful attempt at appeasing the "imishologu" by means of the goats.

These hours had been spent by the men in heavy drinking; all had endeavoured to make up the time that had been lost, and the beer, being now fully fermented, was at its point of greatest strength, just before turning sour.

Nomayeshè, wild-eyed and quivering, strode into the circle and sank exhausted to the ground before 'Ndondo, who was the only one present with whom she was acquainted. In disjointed sentences she began asking about her child, for she knew that the one she had heard of as crying under the stone must be little Nodada.

'Ndondo was in a very maudlin state, and the only two clear ideas he had were: that he must on no account whatsoever affront

the witch-doctors, and that the said witch-doctors had stringently forbidden any interference with the child beneath the stone, under peril of the vengeance of the "imishologu"; or rather, what concerned 'Ndondo more nearly, under peril of offending the witch-doctors themselves.

'Ndondo accordingly declared, with drunken emphasis, that he knew nothing of the matter, and that the account of the child crying under the stone was an idle tale set current by boys, who should be well beaten for speaking falsely.

The most celebrated witch-doctor, however, took a different line. He had reached that stage in his cups which brings to some immense self-confidence. He arose, albeit somewhat unsteadily, and made a vigorous and eloquent speech. He recapitulated all he had previously said about the danger of offending the "imishologu" by interference with their concerns. He drew attention to an occurrence of a few years back, which was still fresh in the memories of all present, when the solid earth had shaken until a bluff of the mountain slid down with thunderous roarings, and overwhelmed a kraal, not one of the inhabitants of which had escaped.

Continuing, he depicted once more the happy condition of the child in the subterranean fields. He ended by pronouncing the direst anathemas upon any one becoming accessory to the impious deed which the woman contemplated.

Then Nomayeshè went around the circle, grovelling at the feet of each individual separately, and beseeching that she might be shown the spot where her Nodada, her little wild duck, the child she had carried in her womb and suckled at her breast, lay perishing in the cold and darkness. Some of the men were evidently inclined to tell, but the warning frowns of the witch-doctors deterred them, and they maintained the cruelty of silence.

Then Nomayeshè broke out into fierce rage, and cursed all present, and their fathers and mothers before them as dogs and apes. She wished that they might die under the spears of an enemy, and that the bodies of their children might shrivel and hiss under their burning roof-trees. This outburst came as a great relief to the men. Her invective was easier to endure than her entreaties, and the drunken crew only laughed at her fury.

While all this was going on, the two women who had followed Nomayeshè arrived at the kraal. They had found out, from some other women they had met, all that Nomayeshè wanted to know. These women described accurately the situation of the flat stone, so when Nomayeshè staggered back from the beer-drinkers, and met her two friends outside the circle of huts, she was led at once by them to the gorge where she knew that her lost child lay hidden.

It was dusk when they reached the stone. With unerring instinct the mother made straight for the largest crevice, through which she at once descended into the darkness. The two women waited in silence, standing apart from each other. Soon a faint shriek was heard issuing as though from the bowels of the earth. The women looked at each other with awe in their eyes. . . . Nomayeshè emerged from the crevice, clasping her dead child to her bosom.

* * * * *

It was past midnight when the three women, carrying Nodada's body, arrived at Zwilibanzi's kraal. Their return journey was made by a longer but safer route. Nomaye-

shè placed the little body on a mat, and then laid herself down next to it. The two women lit a fire, and prepared some food. When they went to Nomayeshè to try and persuade her to eat, they found that she was dead.

THE MADNESS OF GWEVA

"I have not left any calamity more hurtful to man than woman."—*Table-talk of Mohammad.*

I

"YES, my father; for although your years are many less than mine, did you not protect me, even as a father, when these dogs of Fingo policemen would have made me guilty over the chopping down of that white iron-wood tree? I will now tell you the tale of Gweva, the son of Mehlo, which we yesterday spoke of when resting in the big forest during the hunt. Here, boy, bring fuel for the fire, for the night is cold and the tale is long. Fetch also the last pot of that beer which was brewed seven days ago. The new beer has not yet worked, and it tastes like water from a muddy puddle. Fetch also the large calabash spoon; then clear out, and come not near unless you are called.

"There is one subject, my father, upon which you and I will never agree, namely women. You tell me that the women of your race are wiser than those of mine. This is no doubt true in the same sense as that you, a European, are wiser than I, a Kafir; but experience teaches me that women are just women, whatever be their colour, and that men should be their masters. Where it is otherwise, trouble always follows. I grant you that some women are wiser and better than most men; your great Queen, for instance. Her I used to hear of when I was a boy, and I still hear of her now that my head is white. *She* must be strong and wise. Then, who has not heard of Gubèlè the wife of Umjoli, the cowardly chief of the Abasekunene, who, when her husband fled before Tshaka, remained behind with half of the tribe, and slew so many Zulus that men sang of her that she piled up the gateways of her kraal with Zulu heads to prevent the cattle from coming out.

"But such women, my father, are really men, and besides, one does not meet them, one only hears of them. I speak of the women one sees and knows and who become the mothers of our children, and I say that

he who is their master, and holds them for his profit and pleasure, for the bringing forth of sons to fight for the chief (I forgot for the moment that we are under Government) and daughters for whom 'lobola' (dowry) cattle will be sent to his kraal, is wise, whilst he who sets his heart on one woman only, and desires her above all else, suffers from a madness that often leads to ruin.

"Hear then the tale of Gweva, the son of Mehlo, which tends to prove the truth of my judgment in this matter. I will relate it, so far as I can, in the words of my grandfather Nqokomisa, who told it to me many years ago; he being at the time a man extremely old, also blind and deaf, and bereft of the use of every member except the tongue.

"You have heard of our 'great chief' 'Ngwanya, whose body lies in the deep pool in the Tina river just below the drift where the wagons cross. They tied him to a green iron-wood log and sunk him in the water so that no enemy could obtain his bones wherewith to work magic against the tribe. Every year are cast into the pool slaughtered oxen and new bowls of beer as offerings. You may have noticed that no

woman of the Pondomisi ever lifts her skin skirt, no matter how high the water is, in crossing the Tina.

"Well, in the days of 'Ngwanya, we Pondomisi occupied the whole of the country between the Dedesi, at the source of the Umzimvubu, and the Umtata. We were then a large tribe, and we feared no enemy. When we rose against the English in the last war, we should have regained our position had not our chief Umhlonhlo offended the 'imishologu' by killing his magistrate treacherously. Then an evil spirit put it into the minds of some of us to attack the Fingoes of the Tsitsa, who thereupon became our enemies instead of our allies, as had been arranged. When Makaula and his Bacas slaughtered us in the Tina valley the 'imishologu' had turned their faces from us, and we knew it.

"'Ngwanya was old when his father died, and was the father of many sons and daughters. The eldest daughter of his 'great house' was Nomasaba, and it is of the madness caused by her, which fell upon Gweva, the son of Mehlo, that I am about to tell.

"Mehlo was the younger brother of 'Ngwanya. He was killed in a battle with

the Tembus, on the Bazaya Mountain. He was a young man of great courage, and his death was so much lamented that his uncle, who had been to him as a father, found his hair grow grey with grief. Mehlo had only one wife—he had only been married a few months before his death. The wife was, according to custom, taken into 'Ngwanya's household, and when, half a year afterwards, she gave birth to a boy, it was said that his name should be 'Gwevu,' which means 'grey.' Soon afterwards she died, and the boy was formally adopted into 'Ngwanya's 'great house.' Once he was gored by a grey ox, and thereupon the witch-doctors said that his name was an unlucky one, so they changed it to 'Gweva,' which means 'one who spies about.'

"When Gweva was three years old, Nomasaba was born, and these two grew up together in one hut. According to native custom they were brother and sister. I have been told that amongst Europeans marriage is allowed between people so related, but with us such a thing would be looked upon as most horrible and unnatural.

"Gweva grew up exactly like what his father had been—tall and strong, brave as a

lion, and with eyes and voice that commanded the obedience of men, even against their will. When hardly more than a lad he could fling an assegai or a knobbed stick farther, and as true, as any man in the tribe. But for the madness that fell on him he would have been chief in the room of Pahlo, who was only of the right-hand house, the only son of the 'great house,' into which Gweva had been legally adopted, having died young, through being bitten by a snake.

"Nomasaba was said to be the most beautiful woman ever seen. She was not black, but of a rich brown colour; she had large, smooth, rounded limbs, a neck like the trunk of a young tree, a bosom fit to give milk to the son of a great chief, and pleasing features, which, however, but seldom smiled. Her voice, although soft, was said to resemble that of a man. Nomasaba was sought by many in marriage, but she treated all offers with disdain.

"When Tahli succeeded Dayènè as great chief of the Pondos, 'Ngwanya became desirous that Nomasaba should be his 'great wife,' so without the girl's knowledge he sent messengers, of whom my grandfather was one, to the 'great place' in Pondoland,

to open negotiations on the subject. My grandfather, being fleet of foot, was sent with the assegai and the 'umlomo,' or 'word present' for the intended bridegroom. These he dropped in the Pondo chief's presence and then, according to custom, fled, pursued by the young men of the kraal. Although hard pressed, he succeeded in escaping; otherwise, had he been caught, he would have been driven homeward ignominiously with his hands bound behind him, and the 'umlomo' tied on his back.

"After this the women were sent to 'hlolela' or 'spy' for the bride, and whilst they were absent on this errand Nomasaba was informed for the first time of the marriage which had been arranged for her. To the surprise and embarrassment of all, she declared that she did not want to marry, and that nothing would induce her to go to the Pondo chief. However, we natives have our own ways of arranging such matters, so no notice was taken of her words.

"Gweva was absent on a military expedition against a clan of Tembus which dwelt amongst the mountains just over our inland border, and which had been raiding into our territory. He had departed shortly before

the first messengers were sent, and he did not return until after the 'hlolela' party had come back, having arranged all preliminaries. Nomasaba was then told that she should start with the bridal party on a certain day, and after declaring over and over again with considerable violence that she would kill herself, and that they might take her dead body to the Pondo chief, she suddenly changed her tone, and cheerfully signified her willingness to accept Tahli as her husband.

"In due course the bridal party started. The bride was accompanied by twenty girls and fifty young men, including my grandfather and Gweva, who went as the representatives of 'Ngwanya. Amongst the girls was one Nonsimbi, who was known as Nomasaba's shadow, for the reason that she hardly ever left Nomasaba's side. She was a girl of fierce temper and great strength, and she loved Nomasaba as a dog loves its master.

"The 'great place' of the Pondo chief was distant about five days' walk from that of 'Ngwanya. On the afternoon of the fourth day Nomasaba, at whose side Nonsimbi was walking, suddenly fell to the ground with a sharp cry. When questioned

she said she had hurt her ankle, and that it was impossible for her to proceed any farther. They were then on the bank of the Umzimvubu river, close to the Lukawi drift, and there were no dwellings of men close at hand. The huts at which it had been arranged to sleep were still a long way ahead, so nothing could be done except halt for the night where they were. Some of the young men went into the forest close by to cut light poles and wattles which they meant to bind together in the form of a litter, whereon to carry Nomasaba next day unless, as appeared unlikely, she should prove to be better in the morning.

"Nomasaba, moaning and crying out, limped, with the assistance of Nonsimbi, to a spot a short distance apart from where the others had halted, and there lay down.

"Next morning at daylight when the men awoke they found that Gweva, the son of Mehlo, Nomasaba, and Nonsimbi had disappeared. Search was made in every direction, but a heavy dew had fallen, and consequently no spoor could be found. This, of course, indicated that the three must have taken their departure early in the night.

II

"I will not say much about what happened to my grandfather, the men of the escort, and the companions of the bride. They did not proceed to the 'great place' of the Pondo chief, but after searching much and finding no trace of the missing ones, started for home, travelling so fast, that although the return journey was up-hill, they performed it in less than three days. They had much difficulty in persuading 'Ngwanya of the truth of their story, and the lives of my grandfather and, in fact, of all the men of the party, were in the greatest danger. To avoid so far as possible any cause of quarrel, 'Ngwanya, who was at the time at war with the Tembus, sent the fifty men who had formed the escort unarmed to Tahli to answer for their carelessness, and suffer such punishment as the Pondo chief might think fit to inflict. However, by that time Tahli's wrath was no longer hot, so he sent them back unpunished.

"What now follows was told many years afterwards when, 'Ngwanya being dead and the Bahlo chief in his place, she ventured

to return to the Pondomisi country to die among her own people.

"It would appear that the plan of escaping was arranged before the bridal party left 'Ngwanya's 'great place,' in fact on the very day Nomasaba stated her willingness to accept the Pondo chief as her husband. The plan originated with Nomasaba herself, and she caused Nonsimbi to communicate the same to Gweva. No particular spot was fixed upon for the escape, it being settled that Gweva should give the signal agreed upon, on reaching some locality where, from the density of its forests and its lack of inhabitants, escape would be rendered easy.

"Through Nonsimbi's good management the fugitives were enabled to take with them enough food to last several days. They fled quite early in the night, in fact whilst some of the men were still talking around the fires, and slipped at once into the forest. They then bore swiftly away towards the coast by a route which Gweva had discovered in the afternoon when cutting sticks for the litter whereon to carry Nomasaba.

"The coast country in this part of Pondoland is extremely broken, and even now is well wooded, but in those days it was covered

by dense, almost continuous forest, which was full of elephants, buffaloes, and other kinds of game. All this had been ascertained by Gweva from the people of the kraals at which he and his party had rested on their way down. Gweva's idea was to lie in hiding in the forest for some little time, and then work his way down until he could manage to cross the Umtata river and enter the country of the Amabonwane, who were reported to be hospitable to strangers.

"In the forest track, however, were living a number of Pondo outlaws, formerly the adherents of a chief who had rebelled against Tahli's father Dayènè, and had lost his life in consequence. These people were fierce and brave; for years they had evaded the different expeditions sent against them. They always made welcome and incorporated among themselves any fugitives from Pondoland or elsewhere who were willing to join them. They lived principally by hunting, but had entered into a secret arrangement with those people living nearest the forest, who, in return for being left unmolested, grew a little grain for the outlaws and looked after the few cattle that they owned.

"One day Gweva and his two companions found themselves surrounded by a number of these people. Instead, however, of being killed, as they expected, the fugitives were civilly treated; eventually they were received into full fellowship by the outlaw community.

"Gweva represented that his house had been 'eaten up' after his father had been 'smelt out' by the witch-doctor, and killed, and that he, with his wife and sister, for he represented Nonsimbi as standing in the latter relationship towards himself, had fled in consequence from over the Pondo border.

"Gweva soon became a leader amongst the outlaws; his bravery, his skill in hunting, and his strength being very great. Nomasaba and Nonsimbi built huts in a glade deep in the thickest part of the forest, and there the three dwelt together for a time. But women were scarce among the outlaws, and soon Nonsimbi found herself asked in marriage after a manner which made it difficult for her to refuse, so she left the dwelling of Gweva, and went to live with one of the leaders of the outlaws as his wife.

"Gweva and Nomasaba dwelt together in the forest for four years, during which time

the man's madness did not abate, and it was said that the madness of the woman became worse as time passed. Although living very much to themselves and, in fact, avoiding other people as much as possible, they seemed to be happy and contented with their lot. Early in the second year Nomasaba bore a son, and in the year following she was delivered of a daughter.

"The forest being full of game there was never any lack of meat; much honey was to be found in the hollow trees; and the ground held many roots which were fit for food. Besides, some few trees bore fruits, and on the dead tree-trunks large mushrooms, good to eat, grew plentifully. After they had become accustomed to the life, Gweva and Nomasaba ceased to feel any hardship. Besides, their love-madness for each other was such that they were content only to be together.

"It was early in the fourth year of Gweva's dwelling in the forest when messengers from the Pondo chief arrived offering forgiveness to the outlaws if they would consent to leave the forest and return to their homes. The outlaws assembled and heard the words of the messengers, who satisfied them that the

proposals were made in good faith, and that the chief really meant to overlook the past. Most of the outlaws were tired of the life they were leading, so were glad to accept the terms proposed, and return to their allegiance.

"The word being given, the whole outlaw community moved out of the forest and assembled between the Umlengaan hill and the Umgazi river, at a spot agreed upon. Here they were met by the chief induna of Tahli, who had brought a herd of cattle given by the chief as a token of forgiveness. The appearance of the outlaws was extremely fierce—they were gaunt and worn from the effects of the hard life and the scarcity of food. The children born in the forest were as wild as apes, and showed great uneasiness in the open country. In passing through the Umzimvubu forest, several of them ran away and hid, and were only recovered after great difficulty.

"It was soon ascertained that Gweva, who was known amongst the outlaws by the name of Sondaba, and his family were missing. No particular attention was paid to this fact at the time, but some months afterwards, when the people had settled in their old

homes, it began to be talked about. The late outlaws were naturally much given to discussion with their old friends as to all that had happened in Pondoland during recent years, and, as may be imagined, the disappearance of the daughter of the Pondomisi chief when on her wedding journey did not fail to be mentioned. Gradually the idea grew that the wife of Sondaba was the missing bride, and the shocking suggestion that these two who lived as man and wife were really brother and sister (as, according to our ideas, they were) was whispered from one to another. Nonsimbi, who had also changed her name, was questioned on the subject, but no information could be elicited from her.

"The rumour at length reached the ears of Tahli, who sent word of it to 'Ngwanya, asking what he wished to be done. 'Ngwanya's wrath at the flight of Nomasaba had from the first been fiercer than Tahli's, and his heart was such that he never forgave an insult or an injury. He sent back word to the Pondo chief that he wished his shameless daughter and her criminal lover to be captured and sent to him for punishment. Such punishment, the messengers added,

would be of such severity that men would talk of it for many years.

"Tahli thereupon dispatched an expedition to capture Gweva and Nomasaba. Some of those who had been outlaws acted as guides, and accordingly, a few days after the arrival of 'Ngwanya's messenger, the valley wherein the huts of Gweva were built was surrounded by armed men. But Gweva, who evidently had expected some such event, had removed from the valley just after the departure of the outlaws, and taken up his abode some distance away, nearer the sea.

"Gweva had great skill in the training of dogs to hunt, and it was through his dogs that he was betrayed to his doom. After vainly scouring the forest in unsuccessful search of the fugitives during several days, the induna in charge of the expedition decided to return home. He and the guides were of opinion that Gweva had fled across the Umtata river.

"On the first day of the return journey one of a hunting party, that had been led afar in pursuit of a wounded koodoo, heard a dog barking in the distance. Following the sound, the men went up a narrow, winding valley with steep, rocky sides, until they

came to a cave. The dog had now ceased barking, having been, as they afterwards found out, tied up inside the cave. They had found tracks leading to the cave, so the men, who were ten in number, formed a line before its mouth, so that none who were inside could escape. They then advanced, and a man armed with a large stabbing spear and a shield made of buffalo hide, came towards them, calling out a warning that they were to advance no farther. Behind him was a woman also armed with a spear. She had two children with her, one she held to her breast, whilst the other clung to her skin skirt. The man and woman looked so fierce that the ten stood still for a space at their warning.

"'Who are you, and what do you want?' asked the man of the cave.

"'Who we are matters not,' replied the leader of the ten, 'but we want you, Gweva, and this wife of yours who is also your sister.'

"'My husband, it has come,' said the woman in a deep but quiet voice; 'I will do my work; see that you do yours as well.'

"With that she plunged the spear into the back of the little boy who was clinging to

her skirt; then she withdrew it, and drove it through the body of the child which she held on her arm. This done, she flung down the spear, lifted her arms high over her head, and cried out in a loud voice:

"'My husband, I am ready—remember.'

"The man turned, lifted his spear, and smote the woman downwards above the left breast.

"He withdrew the spear gently, and the woman sank slowly to the ground, he supporting her to save her from falling, and holding his hand under her head as she lay, until she ceased gasping.

"The man then lifted his shield from where he had placed it leaning against a rock, put his arm through the loop-thong, and turned towards the ten, who stood struck dumb and rigid by what they had seen. Those who were living when the sun went down that day said that the face of Gweva was like a thunder-cloud, and that red flashes darted out of his eyes. He lifted his spear and sprang upon the ten like a wounded lion. Their surprise at the deeds they had just witnessed was such, that they were taken quite unprepared. Three fell dead from as many rapid strokes, and then

the others closed in on the desperate man, who did not seem to heed the many wounds which were dealt him. A fourth fell with his throat slit in such a manner that he soon afterwards died, and then Gweva drove his spear so hard into the head of a fifth, through the eye, that the weapon stuck by its edges between the bones of the aperture. Being thus disarmed, Gweva was quickly pierced through the heart from behind, so he sank dead to the ground.

"This was the end of Gweva, the son of Mehlo, who was smitten with such a strange madness of desire for a woman whom he could not lawfully take as his wife. Had he escaped this misfortune of love-madness, he might have been 'great chief' of the Pondomisi nation, and have taken a new woman to his kraal each year, through all the years of his life."

THE LOVE CHARM

"Fetch me that flower; the herb I showed thee once;
The juice of it on sleeping eyelids laid,
Will make or man or woman madly dote
Upon the next live creature that it sees."
A Midsummer Night's Dream.

"CA, 'mntan 'am (no, my child), I am too old, as you can see for yourself; my memory is no longer good, and all these things happened so very long ago. Besides, you have not yet told me why you want me to talk about these old days, you white people are so wise you cannot require to learn from an old woman such as I. Hear him now, what can the great people who live beyond the sea in those big houses you show me the shadows (pictures) of, and of which I never can tell the top from the bottom, want to know about the dead and gone Bacas? Yes, yes, I have heard all this before from you, and you know I only promised to talk on

condition that you told me the true reason why you wanted to write down my words.

"You white people are *very* sly; you know most things, yet one thing you are always trying to learn, all of you: the magic of the native. And what is our magic compared with yours? With us the 'isanuse' (witch-doctor) calls to all in a loud voice, boasting of what he knows, yet you 'abelungu' (white people) are for ever trying to persuade the natives that you are not wizards. Don't tell me. Does not one of you speak with your mouth close to the end of an iron string at Umzimkulu, while another listens at Matatièlè where the string passes over the big poles, and hear the words spoken? and this over a distance which it takes a man six days to walk. I know myself that such is the case, because when my granddaughter's baby was born at Umzimkulu last spring, did I not learn it from the pink paper which the constable read to me on the same day. I asked Rachel particularly about the date afterwards, and she swore to me that the child was born two days before the new moon, and that was the day on which the constable came.

"Did you not yourself open the eye of

a box at me, with a click, and show me the next day the water-shadow of myself upon paper; and was not the very torn place in my blanket, which I had not yet mended, there too? Magic, *I* know magic when I see it.

"Yes, I am very old. I remember, like it were yesterday, the time when Ncapay was killed by the Pondos, when he and his 'impi' were driven over the cliff on the Umzimvubu, and I have seen our chief, Makaula, herding calves when he was a boy. My first husband was old Palelo (he died when I was away at Umzimkulu), and my second was Momlotyolo, who got his head broken with a club in a fight with the Pondomisi. He came home with his head tied up, and laid himself down on a mat. Next day he could not speak. He lay snoring for five days, and then died in a fit. I had only been married to him three years, and we had three children. The first was a girl, she died when still a child, and the second a boy whom we called Tutani. He was drowned trying to cross the Umzimvubu after a beer-drink.

"The first time I was married? That is long ago, and I have almost forgotten all

about it. We were then living in what is now Cweraland. I was quite a young girl when old Palelo took me as his wife. Yes, he had six other wives then living, and several others had died. Palelo was a very old man, but he was rich and my father was poor. Eighteen head of cattle were given as my dowry, and a new hut was built for me. In this hut old Palelo nearly lived for two years, and I was quite glad when I heard that he was paying 'lobola' for another girl, as I knew that when he married her, he'd leave me alone for a time.

"Who told you that I went to Umzimkulu? So, so, I had forgotten mentioning it. Well, I suppose I may as well tell you everything about it now, because you might hear it spoken of by others who do not know all that happened, and thus come to think evil of me, not knowing that it was Lamla's fault, and that I was blameless.

"You have heard of the charm which a man places upon a woman to make her follow him. Perhaps you do not believe in such things, eh? I thought not. It is strange what a lot of true things you wise people disbelieve in. Well, well, if you do not believe in such things why do you want

to hear about them? I think I know the reason, but it runs on a different spoor to that of your words. Whether you believe in them or not, these things exist. I have lived much longer than you in spite of the drought on the top of your head, and I have not only seen, but experienced the effect of such a charm. No, no, although you are old enough to know better, you are also old enough to have seen that the eyes of a young woman do not shine on you as on younger men, and this knowledge might lead you into mischief.

"Well, I will tell you of some, but not of the strongest. There are many things which can be used as charms, and some work quite differently from others. Some are of use only to a young man, and some to one who is old. There is the 'duba' (wild garlick: *Tulbaghia alliacea*) which is pounded up with fat and clay, and kept in the tip of a goat's horn. If a young man touch a young woman with this it will make her think of him night and day, until the 'umdhlemnyana' (a kind of hysteria) seizes her. This will never leave her unless he releases her, or she can steal the charm from where he has to keep it, wrapped in a skin, in the roof of his dwell-

ing. Then there is the 'insonga 'mazwe' (lit. 'turner,' or 'wrapper up' of words—*Commelyna speciosa*—a little blue, furry flower, with bright yellow anthers). If a young man bathes, and then rubs himself all over with this, his words become so wise and sweet to the ear, that no woman can deny him anything. Besides, there is that stuff which can be bought at the big stores, 'zamlandela' (camphor; lit. 'that which leads,' or 'induces'). If a young man rub his hands with this, and he touch a girl on the cheeks, she will dream of him whether she be asleep or awake. There are other things; roots and flowers which, if placed by a man in the water-pool at which the girls drink, or in which they bathe in hot weather, will have such an effect that their fathers and brothers will want to shed blood. Then there is another flower which, if broken up and scattered on a path along which a woman walks, will make her follow the man who scattered it wheresoever he leads her. It was in this way I was charmed and led away to Umzimkulu, where I dwelt for a year.

"Lamla came to dwell in our neighbourhood nearly two years after I had married

old Palelo. He was a young man of Umzimkulu. He had been obliged to flee for a time from there on account of having broken the law. He was related to some people of a kraal near ours, and with them he stayed. He was a very big man and a strong dancer, and was nearly always laughing.

"Old Palelo had many sons and daughters, and as he was rich, there was plenty of feasting at our kraal. Lamla often visited my hut and seemed to be very fond of talking to Palelo about old times, and about the deeds my husband had done in his youth. The two would often sit over the fire, far into the night, and I used to lie on my mat, my head covered with a kaross, listening. There was a little hole in the kaross, and through this I used to watch Lamla, who always sat with his face towards me. I do not know how it was, but somehow that part of the kaross with the hole in it was always just in front of my eyes. It was strange to see how fond old Palelo was of Lamla; I think it was because Lamla listened to him so quietly, and just let him talk.

"Lamla said very little to me on these occasions, but we used often to meet when I went down to the pool to fetch water, or to

the millet-field to hoe. I did not altogether like meeting him alone, because the way in which he talked and went on annoyed me. It was not so much his words as his ways that made me angry. Whenever we were alone he mimicked old Palelo—his walk, his voice, his way of taking snuff—everything. Although I could not keep from laughing, I did not like Lamla to go on like this. He said he meant to make himself so like Palelo that none would be able to tell one from the other, and that he came to practise before me, so that I could tell him how he was getting on.

"Sometimes he would tell me about what a lot of girls were in love with him at Umzimkulu, and when I told him to go back to them and not trouble me any more, he said he had got so fond of Palelo that he could not bear to think of departing. Occasionally he would come down to the field where I was hoeing, and if it were a hot day would make me sit with him under a tree, chewing 'imfe' (sweet reed), and listening while he blew music on the 'ugwalo' (a musical instrument formed of a single string attached to a quill, and stretched along a stick), or talking nonsense.

"One day as I was returning from the pool carrying a pot of water, I met Lamla coming out of the bush with a lot of yellow flowers in his hands. I inquired as to what he was going to do with these, and he said he was going to do some 'doctoring.' 'Who, then, is sick?' I asked. 'I am,' he replied. I laughed at this, because at the dance the day before he had tired all the others out. 'Do you know what sickness these are to cure?' he asked, looking at me very hard. 'No,' said I, 'unless it be the sickness that makes people think they are not themselves; that is the only sickness you have got.' 'Why, you are almost as good as a doctor yourself,' he replied; then he laughed and went away.

"Next morning I saw some little bits of yellow stuff on the ground just outside my hut, and also strewn along the pathway leading to the millet-field. I picked a piece up, and found it to be very like a portion of a flower such as Lamla had been carrying when I met him coming out of the bush. I soon picked up a whole flower. This, without considering what I was doing, I stuck into the carrying-hole of my left ear. Then it suddenly seemed as if something began to

sing inside me, and I felt very happy, but rather frightened.

"On that day I could not work. I felt as if quite changed in every way. I could not forget the yellow flowers, or Lamla. I just stuck my hoe into the ground and went to the spot under the big tree where he and I used to sit. It was very hot, so I lay down and soon fell fast asleep.

"I had a strange dream. I thought that Lamla came to me with a lot of yellow flowers tied around his head in the way the Pondos tie the 'imvani' (wild asparagus) when they want rain to fall. I thought he kept changing into old Palelo, and then back into himself again, and that I was running away from him and at the same time feeling sorry that he could not catch me. Just as I thought he had caught me, I woke up suddenly, and there he stood.

"I got such a fright that I screamed out and then began to weep. Lamla sat down next to me. I told him to leave me alone, but he would not, so I jumped up and ran away home.

"That night I could eat nothing, and the 'umdhlemnyana' sickness seized me so badly that old Palelo became quite frightened, and

said he would fetch the witch-doctor next day to see who had bewitched me. When I felt better I lay down to try and sleep, but it was of no use. I dreamed of Lamla's coming, but when it got late and he had not come, I felt like a long-tailed finch trying to fly against the wind on a wet day. I kept wondering as to where he was, and the thought that he might be at a feast at another kraal where there was a girl who I knew liked him, troubled me so much that I got another 'umdhlemnyana' fit, and when old Palelo came to me with a pot of water, I threw the water all over him, and broke the pot. This made me feel a little better, so I lay quiet, pretending to be asleep.

"Old Palelo went to sleep on his mat, but I lay long awake, until at length I felt I could not stay in the hut any longer; something seemed to draw me outside. I took my kaross and left the hut. The moon was large and yellow. The stream of water in the kloof just below was making a noise exactly like some one speaking, and at length I found out what it was saying. It was 'lam-lam-lam-la-la-la-lam-la-la-lam-la-lam-la-lam-la,' that the water was calling out over and over again as it ran over the stones.

Lamla seemed to be all about me, and I kept looking behind me to see if he was not there.

"A jackal up on the hill was calling out 'yonk, yonk, yonk, yow-a-a-ow,' like a man singing through his nose. The bats and night-jars were flitting about, and two owls were crying out to each other among the tops of the yellow-wood trees.

"I first sat down near the hut, but old Palelo was snoring like a big frog, so I walked away beyond the cattle kraal, and laid myself down on the short, green grass, which was cool and wet with dew.

"All this time I could think of nothing but Lamla, and I kept wondering why this should be so. Why did I feel so strange and so changed? My thoughts went back to the first time I had seen him. It was at the wedding feast of one of Palelo's daughters. I remember thinking I had never seen any one dance so well. Then I went over, one by one, all the occasions upon which we had since met. Although they were many I think I remembered every one of them. I began to laugh when I thought of the way he used to mimic my husband. Then I thought of the long talks in the hut at

night, so I lay back and covered myself up with the kaross, looking through the same little hole at a post standing near me, and trying to imagine it was Lamla, giving his ears to Palelo and his eyes to me.

"Next I remembered his coming out of the bush with the yellow flowers, and this set me thinking of what had been strewn on the path. Then I suddenly understood the whole thing—I was bewitched. Lamla had said the flowers were for medicine, and this was what he had meant, the rogue.

"When the thought first struck me I felt very much frightened, and I jumped up, meaning to run into the hut at once. However, I remained where I was for a little time, and then my fright seemed to pass away. Then I walked on a few yards and sat down on the grass.

"I listened to the water calling out Lamla's name, and thought seriously over the whole matter of Lamla and his doings. After considering for a while I concluded that in spite of the 'umdhlemnyana' sickness, being bewitched was, after all, not so very terrible. I had often heard of girls being charmed in this way, and I knew that one cure for it was to follow the man about, and make him take

off the charm. 'Ah, ha, my friend Lamla,' thought I, 'I am up to your ways and tricks, and will let you know it the next time we meet. You have not got a silly girl to deal with this time, but a woman who has been married nearly two years, and who can take care of herself very well, in spite of the "umdhlemnyana."'

"The dogs suddenly began to bark all together, and then they rushed round to the back of the cattle kraal, where they all ceased barking. Just afterwards a man walked out into the moonlight from behind the kraal fence, and came slowly towards me. It was Lamla. The dogs knew him, and were running after him and fawning.

"He came up to where I was sitting, and without saying a word took my hands in his and drew me gently towards him. I stood up, and then he walked on, and I followed. I could not have resisted then, even if I had wanted to, but I do not think I wanted to at all. You see, the charm had influenced me more strongly than I had thought. I was no longer myself, but just Lamla and nothing else.

"I followed Lamla down the hill along the path to the millet-field, and then we sat down

under the tree. The dogs came too, and Lamla got very angry because he could not at first manage to drive them back. 'Lamla,' said I, 'you have bewitched me with those yellow flowers, and we will both be killed by Palelo's sons.' 'No,' said he, 'it is you that have bewitched me, and I only used those flowers to cure myself.'

"After a while we went on together, Lamla leading me by the hand. When we reached a little bush near the kraal he was living at, he left me for a short time, and then he returned with two bundles, one of which he gave me to carry. We walked on all night. Just before daybreak we turned to the left and entered a thick forest. Here we spent the day. We did not light a fire. Lamla had brought some millet already boiled, in a skin bag. We ate this, and also some roots which he dug up with the blade of his spear. From a hollow tree he brought some of the sweetest honey I have ever tasted. He did not seem to mind the bees stinging him at all.

"All this time we hardly spoke a word. In the afternoon we were sitting together hidden in some thick, green brushwood; I heard a rustle and, looking up, saw a long

green snake gliding through the branches just over Lamla's head. I called out: 'Look, there is a snake.' He just smiled and, without standing up, killed the snake with one blow of his stick. It nearly fell on him, so I screamed out, but he laughed and comforted me and said that he had been doctored by a great wizard against all dangerous things except me.

"Then he asked me how I liked being bewitched. I replied: 'I like it very well now, because the charm is on me, but I know that by and by I will be very angry.' He laughed very loud at this. Afterwards he asked me if I knew what had really happened. I answered: 'Yes, Lamla, you wicked man, you have bewitched me and made me follow you away from my home.' 'No, you are mistaken,' said he, 'I am not Lamla at all, but your husband Palelo in Lamla's body; Lamla is still at the kraal in the body of Palelo.' I could not understand how this could be, and I now know that he was talking nonsense, but at the time the charm was so strong on me that I would have believed anything he told me.

"That night we crossed the Umzimvubu, and reached the big forest below the Taban-

kulu. Here we laid down and slept. The sun was high when we awoke. We travelled on through the forest, and again rested and spent the night on the other side.

"Next day we went on without concealment through the open country. We were now in Pondoland, so had nothing to fear, so we just wandered on quietly from kraal to kraal, getting food in plenty; for Lamla had such pleasant ways, especially with the women, that we were always made welcome. Lamla said I was his wife, whom he had fetched from the Pondomisi country, and no one seemed to doubt his words.

"When we reached the Baca country at Umzimkulu, we went straight to the kraal of Lamla's father, and when he told his relations that I was his wife, and that he had paid 'lobola' for me, they all laughed at him, and asked whether horns or feathers grew on the 'lobola' cattle. I did not see at the time why they should have doubted his words, but I found out the reason afterwards.

"At first we lived very happily, for the charm was still strong upon me, but after some months Lamla began to go away from home very often, and then I heard that he was courting another girl. Well, he married

her, and she and I quarrelled, and he took her part and beat me, so I became very miserable. It was nearly a year after we came to Umzimkulu that my baby, a boy, was born.

"One day, when my baby was over a month old, who should walk up to the kraal but the Matshoba, old Palelo's 'great son.' I picked up the child and ran away into the bush, but next day I got hungry and had to return. Matshoba was not very angry. It turned out that Palelo was dead. Matshoba said that I must return with him. I was not sorry to do so, because the charm had now quite passed away from me.

"Matshoba brought a law case before the chief against Lamla for taking me away. I told all about the charm which had been used, and Lamla did not deny having used it. He was ordered by the chief to pay ten head of cattle as a fine. These his father had to pay, because Lamla had no cattle of his own. The chief said that if Lamla's father had got him a wife Lamla would not have gone about bewitching the wives of other people. When the cattle were paid the chief took five head, and Matshoba and I drove the other five to my old

home. Soon afterwards I was married to Momlotyolo.

"My baby grew up and became just like his father both in appearance and ways. When quite a young man he was 'smelt out' for bewitching one of the wives of the chief, and had to flee for his life. I have never heard of him since.

"No, no; I am not going to tell you anything more about the flower. It was not a yellow flower at all, but one of quite another colour. Besides, it is a young man's charm, and therefore would be of no use to you."

DERELICTS

"God help all poor souls lost in the dark."
The Heretic's Tragedy.

"THERE is, after all, nothing equal to philosophic cultivation of the mind for enabling one to withstand misfortune," said the man, as he entered the room.

The woman looked up at him from where she was sitting, with a start of surprise. Pain, love, pity, and yearning made worlds of her eyes.

"Now take my case," continued the man; "it is only four days since Wallie died, and it was but yesterday we laid him in his grave, and yet to-night I feel hardly any grief. Of course, the shock unmanned me at first, but now I am quite myself again. I have never been able to make you see the uses of——"

The man ceased speaking and began to cough. Then he walked slowly backwards

and forwards with an air of extreme preoccupation. The woman said nothing, but kept her eyes, which were now swimming in tears, fixed on him.

"Really, my darling," he continued after a pause, and in an impatient tone, "you must try and look at the thing as I do. He is dead, and we saw the lid of the coffin screwed down over his cold body, yet, wonderful to relate, he is so close to us that I can bring him back at will. I have only to close my eyes and I see him. Look here, I hold his cap just three feet from the floor, and there he stands below it, with his face under the peak, and his curls behind. Now cover your face with the cap, and draw in your breath; —so—did I not tell you?—He has only just taken it off. Now, look: can you not see him there before you? Now he is here nestling up, and just going to beg for a story. There, he has gone over to his rocking-horse. Now close your eyes and rock it; to close your eyes at the right time is the great secret."

Here the man's voice was again interrupted by the cough. The woman stood up and laid her hand caressingly over his shoulder. Then she tried to move in front of him and

look into his eyes. With an impatient gesture he shook himself free, and resumed his walking to and fro, always avoiding her eyes.

"How foolish you are," he resumed, "not to help me, not to participate in this new creation which I have discovered the secret of effecting. Look here, be reasonable, every night we will make up his bed and place his clothes ready for the morning. Then we will tie the string to your wrist so that he can pull it and waken you without disturbing me. Now just try it, and I am quite positive you will feel the string being pulled just when he wants you to kiss him at the usual time. You have always been pitching into me for reading metaphysics, but look at the difference between us now. You remember what Fichte——"

Here the man's voice was once more interrupted by the cough. He turned and leant against the wall, resting his forehead against his arm. The woman tried to make him sit down on an easy-chair, which she drew towards him, but he refused with the same impatient gesture. Soon he resumed his walking, and continued:

"I am even prepared to maintain that in

some respects we are better off than if he had lived. I do not imagine that either of us will last very long, and think what it would have been to leave him behind, uncared for. Then, if he had grown up, who knows what mistakes he might have made, and what he might have suffered. As it is now, he will always be the same to us. I am glad you are not crying any longer. Now I will go and carry his cot back into the bedroom. Do not come in until I have things arranged."

There was a smell of carbolic disinfectant throughout the house, for the boy had died of diphtheritic croup, after an agonizing illness of five days. This smell continually suggested death to the woman; it seemed to have got into her nostrils permanently, go where she would she could not avoid it. She now stood up from where she had been sitting near the fire-place, and walked into the drawing-room, which had a south-eastern aspect. It was winter, and the night was somewhat unseasonably warm. The weather had long been dry. A bright moon was high in the heavens. The woman stood in the dark room and looked out of the window to where the bare, silvery rods of a willow

swayed and undulated to the faint, intermittent breeze. Then her gaze wandered to an oak, out of the leafless boughs of which hung the ropes of the boy's swing, oscillating gently. Every now and then she coughed, and the sound of the man's coughing reached her at short intervals from the next room. The rising wind began to sough and moan over the house, and to call ghostly whisperings from the bare, chafing branches of the crowded oak trees. Stretched across the sky from horizon to horizon was a curved fringe of delicate snow-white cloud, suggestive of an ostrich feather in shape and texture. This came nearer every moment. It hung for a breath like a broken, opaline halo round the moon. Now it was over the house, and the moon was again clear, but low down on the southern horizon from whence it had arisen, dark clouds of gradually increasing bulk were surging up, and faint lightnings flickering.

The man came from the bedroom into the passage and called to the woman, who silently joined him, and again passed her arm over his shoulder.

"Come along, darling," he said, as they went towards the bedroom; "see how I have

arranged it all. What a pity we did not think of this last night!"

The little cot had been moved back to its place, and in it the boy's bed had been made, pillow, white sheet turned back, and little eider-down quilt, all complete. In the middle of the pillow was a dent, as if a head had just been lying there, and the bed-clothes were slightly tumbled. On a chair at the foot of the cot were carelessly thrown a flannel shirt, a blue-striped tunic, and a pair of blue serge knickerbockers; upon these lay loose a pair of cardinal-coloured socks, and two shoes with bright steel buckles stood close by on the floor. The woman walked up to the cot, her face was ashen. Her lips had ceased quivering, but she could not speak. Her heart stood almost still. Her mental tension was such that she almost lost consciousness. Two impressions dominated all others, the smell of the carbolic, and the swelling moan of the wind over the roof. The man went on garrulously, and in a cheerful voice:

"Look here, we will hang his plaid over the side of the cot, and when we light the candle in the night to see if he is covered properly, we can just *know* that he is there,

behind it. He lies so quietly that we never can hear him breathe.

"Sit down now and I will read a chapter of the Bible to you. It is past our usual time."

The man stretched forth his hand and took a Bible down from a small book-shelf which hung on the wall close to the head of the bed. Then he began to speak, turning over the leaves at the same time.

"Let me see, what shall we read to-night? I forgot to-day to pick one out that Wallie will not ask awkward questions about.

"Ah! here is the one about King David's child dying; you remember he lost a child, a boy too, his son and Bathsheba's. . . . I will read this. Come close; I believe Wallie is asleep, so I must speak low. . . . How the wind is wailing; . . . . but you know, wind always makes him sleep more soundly."

The woman bent forward and hid her face in her hands, her elbows resting on her knees. The man began to read:

"And it came to pass on the seventh day that the child died. And the servants of David feared to tell him that the child was dead: for they said, Behold, while the child was yet alive, we spake unto him, and he

would not hearken unto our voice: how will he then vex himself if we tell him that the child is dead?

"But when David saw that his servants whispered, David perceived that the child was dead: therefore David said unto his servants, Is the child dead? and they said, He is dead.

"Then David arose from the earth and washed, and anointed himself; and changed his apparel, and came into the House of the Lord, and worshipped; then he came to his own house; and when he required, they set bread before him, and he did eat.

"Then said his servants unto him: What thing is this that thou hast done? Thou didst fast and weep for the child while it was alive, but when the child was dead thou didst arise and eat bread.

"And he said, While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept: for I said, Who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that the child may live?

"But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not come to me."

The wind had gradually increased in violence, and now there came a strong gust

and a sudden dash of rain against the iron roof. The man ceased reading, and looked up with a light of wildness in his eyes. Then he flung down the book, started up, and ran around to the other side of the bed, where the cot was. He looked into the cot, and a long cry of agony broke from him when he saw that it was empty. He staggered and would have fallen but for the woman, who supported him for a moment, and then let him sink back on the bed. Another fit of coughing came on, after which white foam, slightly tinged with blood, appeared on his lips. The rain, with which hail was now mixed, swept down on the roof in a roaring torrent.

Suddenly the man sprang up, and before the woman could restrain him, had reached the passage leading to the front door.

"Come, come," he shouted, "he is out in the cold and wet, and we are in here warm and dry. Let me go; I will take his plaid to put over him. You do not care, or you would not try to stop me. Let me go."

All this time he was struggling to escape from the woman's clasping arms, and at length he succeeded. He rushed back into the bedroom, seized the plaid from where it

hung on the cot, and again made for the door. The woman followed him with an overcoat, and caught him as he was turning the handle.

"Wait one moment, Fred," she said in a low-toned voice, which had the immediate effect of calming him, "we will go together. Come back with me until I get my cloak."

He followed her back to the bedroom, and there walked impatiently about, struggling to get into the overcoat, and coughing incessantly. She put on a waterproof ulster, and then opened a little jewel-case which stood on the dressing-table. From this she took a thick, glossy lock of dark, curly hair, which she hid in the bosom of her dress.

The woman took the man's arm, and the two walked out into the wild night. It was not dark, for the moon was nearly full, but swift on the wings of the screaming gale low, combing clouds were hurrying over the land. From these heavy showers of piercing sleet fell. Each shower only lasted for a few minutes, but the intervals between them were hardly longer. As the storm grew, the duration of the showers increased, whilst that of the intervals diminished. As yet, how-

ever, the moon shone out brightly after each shower.

The graveyard was on the spur of a mountain which overhung the river about a mile below the village. Thither the man and the woman wended. Fortunately the wind was behind them. It was this circumstance that made their progress possible. They never could have faced the howling storm. Faster and faster they staggered onward, the woman supporting the man by means of her left arm, which she had passed around his body, and holding his left in her right hand. They both coughed dreadfully, but the paroxysms of the man were the worse.

They reached the graveyard at length, and sank down exhausted on the boy's grave. Just then, a furious shower of hail lashed out of a driving cloud, and in a few moments the whole world was white. They managed to spread the plaid over the little mound. The woman being on the windward side, held it for a while in position, and soon the hail lay thickly on it.

In a short lull between two of the worst gusts the woman managed to creep around to the other side of the grave where the man was lying huddled. She passed her arm

around him in the old protective manner, and laid her cold lips against his cheek, which was like frozen marble. He was only just breathing. Then the cough seized him again, and he struggled violently. The woman closed her eyes, and held him fast. He gave a great gulp, a shudder passed over his limbs, and then he lay still.

The woman opened her eyes. The moon was shining brightly through a narrow rift between the storm-cloud that had just passed over and the one hurrying on its track. The dazzlingly white hail covered everything, and lay in heaps against the graveyard wall, the tree-trunks, and the tombstones. It half covered the man and the woman, and on the white heap against which his head was lying, was a dark stain.

The woman closed her eyes and lay with her head against the man's body. She soon fell asleep, and dreamt a dream. She thought she was swinging in the hammock which was slung between the verandah poles of the cottage, reading to the boy his favourite story. It was a slight and simple allegory which the man had composed for him, and was based principally upon the last chapter of Revelation, the description of the Delec-

table Mountains, and Augustine's City of God. The story was written in the man's happiest vein, and was full of the loveliest fancy-play. The best passage in it was that description of the valley through which runs the River of the Water of Life. She read as far as this, and lo! in the twinkling of an eye she was in the valley. There stood the grove of those wondrous trees which bear twelve different kinds of fruit, and the leaves of which are for the healing of the suffering nations.

But she was alone in the midst of all this wonder and beauty. She wandered along in a state of disquietude, seeking something or somebody, she knew not who or what. Then she heard a halloa far away in a voice that seemed familiar, and that sent a thrill of agonizing bliss through her being. Soon a well-known, pattering footstep sounded down one of the spacious avenues, and the boy rushed into her arms. After an ecstatic moment she lifted her face out of his dark curls, and saw the man hurrying towards her with shining face and outstretched arms.

THE RETURN OF SOBÈDÈ[1]

"There is a deal of human nature in mankind."
JOSH BILLINGS.

I

SOBÈDÈ stood in the prisoners' dock before the Circuit Court at Kokstad, between his fellow-prisoners Kwekwe and Gazile, and pleaded "Not Guilty" to the charge of having stolen four head of cattle from one Jasper Swainson, a farmer dwelling in the valley of the Indwana river, Umzimkulu district, whom he had served as a shepherd two years previously.

Sobèdè belonged to the Hlangweni tribe, whilst his companions were Gaika Kafirs from near King William's Town. But the important difference between Sobèdè and the others lay in this: that whereas they were

[1] This story has appeared in the *South African Telegraph*.

guilty of the crime laid to their charge, he was as innocent as was his Lordship the learned judge who, clad in a gorgeous vestment of crimson silk, was trying him.

Appearances were, however, strongly against Sobèdè. The evidence showed that the stolen cattle had been found by the farmers who followed on their spoor in the possession of the three prisoners, and were at the time being driven up one of the gorges of the steep Drakensberg range, in the direction of Basutoland, that great and grievous receptacle for stolen stock of all kinds. When Sobèdè told his story, namely, that he had casually joined the other two but a few minutes before he had been apprehended, having come from his kraal along one of the many footpaths leading through the same gorge, no one believed him, although the relation was perfectly true. His wife, Mampitizili, with her two-months-old baby slung on her back and hushing it as she spoke, gave evidence to the effect that her husband had left her after the sun was high on the same day for the purpose of fetching medicine from a native doctor for the week-old baby, which happened at the time to be ailing, whereas the cattle had been stolen thirty

hours previously. His old, half-decrepit father, 'Mbopè, corroborated Mampitizili's statement in a voice that rose to a quavering shout. The old man's lips trembled, his eyes flashed for a moment through the blue film that had gradually overspread them during the past few years, and he held his shaking right hand with the two first fingers extended high over his head. He really afforded a very fine tragic spectacle, and suggested a kind of Bantu Lear in appearance and mien, but to judge by the behaviour of the jury the exhibition was rather comic than otherwise, for they put their heads together and laughed consumedly. *They* knew the dodges all these old niggers get up to, and it was quite clear that the old man had pitched it too strong for sincerity. The old man's display evidently impressed his Lordship, but was nevertheless of no use to Sobèdè. The damning fact remained that the cattle had been stolen from a farmer in whose service he had for some time been, and when the passing flash of insight had faded from the mind of the judge, no one in court except Sobèdè's wife and father had the slightest doubt as to Sobèdè's guilt.

The prosecuting barrister finished his

address to his own entire satisfaction, and then, sitting down, leaned back in his seat and contemplated the recently-painted ceiling, conscious of having done his duty to society. Then the judge made a few remarks of an analytic nature, inclining at the same time towards the jury-box with that well-known and well-studied air of forensic friendliness which so tends to establish a good understanding between all parties concerned; except, perhaps, the prisoner at the bar. After this the nine heads of the jurymen bent towards each other in a whispered colloquy which may perhaps have lasted for thirty seconds. Then the jurymen all stood up together, and the foreman communicated their verdict as one of "guilty" against the three prisoners.

Then the judge, pushing back the forensic friendliness stop, and drawing out that of judicial austerity, began to admonish the prisoners, and it could be seen that it was at Sobèdè his harangue was chiefly aimed. Although the address was well interpreted, Sobèdè could not follow the drift of it, his attention being divided between the wails of his child sounding faintly from the court-house yard where the witnesses were kept,

and the little white tippets which waggled a silent accompaniment to his Lordship's eloquence over the breast of his Lordship's beautiful red silk robe. The baseness of ingratitude (it had transpired in the course of the evidence that Sobèdè had, in recognition of meritorious service, been sent away with four goats over and above his specified wages) was enlarged upon, and the ineradicable nature of the furtive bent in the average Bantu was treated from an ethnological point. Eventually Sobèdè found himself sentenced to three years' imprisonment with hard labour, whilst his companions, who could not help smiling at the peculiarity of the situation, got off each with a year less.

After sentence, as he was being hurried through the court-house yard to the lock-up, Sobèdè caught a glimpse of old 'Mbopè crouching with bent head in a corner, and then he passed Mampitizili. She was still hushing the baby, who as yet refused to be comforted, and as her husband passed her with the horror of the prospect of three years of unmerited, painful servitude darkening his uncivilized soul, these two exchanged such looks as are never forgotten on this side of the grave.

II

Mampitizili and 'Mbopè took two days wherein to perform the return journey to Sidotè's location, where they dwelt. Owing to his infirmities the old man walked with great difficulty, but he kept a good heart, and endeavoured his best to comfort the miserable wife of his unhappy son, reminding her from his vantage coign of old age that three years pass very quickly and do not, after all, make much of a slice out of a lifetime. This is quite true when the lifetime is regarded from near the wrong end of it, but such philosophy is unintelligible to the young. The poor woman had only been married about a year, and the baby, a boy, was not yet three months old. It had not as yet even been given a name.

They reached home one cold, misty evening, and it was then that the full significance of their misfortune came home to them for the first time. The friends who had taken charge of the premises during their absence left next morning taking with them a goat, as a reward for their services, and all day long the two miserable creatures sat and hugged

their misery. The hearth was cold, the milk-sacks were empty, and the strong arm and shrewd head of Sobèdè were missed at every turn.

The season was early autumn, and the crops were nearly ready to reap, but during their absence the cattle, the birds, and marauding children from kraals in the next valley had so damaged them that they were now hardly worth the reaping. The calves of two of the best cows had died, and consequently milk was scarce. Everything seemed to be falling into disorganization. A boy of about twelve years of age, a grandson of the old man, was sent to dwell at the kraal for the purpose of assisting in looking after the stock, but the loneliness weighed upon him to such an extent that he repeatedly deserted and ran home, in spite of repeated heavy beatings from his father, who had been promised a cow in payment for the boy's services.

Mampitizili struggled on bravely, and carried up basket after basket of grain from the depleted field, but when the last cob had been harvested there was hardly enough grain to last half-way through the winter, to say nothing of seed for the ensuing spring.

'Mbopè had another son whose name was Manciya. Manciya's mother had been the "great wife," and consequently he took precedence of Sobèdè, whose mother was the wife of 'Mbopè's "right hand." All the rest of 'Mbopè's children were daughters, and they had all long since been married. Sobèdè was 'Mbopè's youngest child and his favourite.

Manciya and his father did not agree, and consequently 'Mbopè had dwelt with Sobèdè since the latter had married and set up a kraal of his own on a sheltered ledge near the head of a deep valley on the eastern fringe of the Hlangweni location. Manciya had, under pretext of seniority, seized the lion's share of the cattle. He had, it is true, a right to a great deal of it, but he took more than his share, and it was only after much trouble that he was compelled to disgorge. However, a herd of about twenty head had been rescued from his clutches and formally ceded to Sobèdè as his prospective share in his father's estate, to be his unconditionally after 'Mbopè's death.

Manciya now and then called to see his father. His kraal, where he dwelt with his several wives, was situated about five miles away. His visits were not welcome, for the

reason that he always appeared to assume that Sobèdè was guilty, and this was resented by both 'Mbopè and Mampitizili. Theft of cattle, especially if it happens to be on a large scale, is probably regarded by the native of to-day more or less as it was regarded by the moss-trooper of the Scotch Border in the sixteenth century. In Sobèdè's case, however, his wife and his father knew him to be suffering for a sin he had not committed. The ever-present sense of injustice made them sensitive, and they felt the inconvenience of their position most keenly.

Two years passed, full of misery to the widowed wife and the old man who now felt his death approaching, and keenly longed for a sight of his favourite son to carry with him into the grave. They did not even know at which of the convict stations Sobèdè was serving his time, for no word from him had ever reached them since the day of his conviction. The little boy grew strong and tall. He was now able to run about. "Kungayè" was the name given to him. This word means "It was through (or owing to) him." This name, the significance of which will be obvious, was not given as a reproach, but so that, in after life, the son might remember

and deplore his father's unmerited sufferings, of which he had been the innocent cause.

III

One evening old 'Mbopè, who had the habit of pottering about digging out medicinal roots with an iron spike, returned and laid himself down on his mat after refusing to eat any supper. The season was again early autumn, and a bitterly cold wind swept down from the snow-flecked Drakensberg range. Next day he was unable to arise, and he lay moaning then and throughout the following night in a burning fever, whilst a cruel cough racked his spent frame. His talk, as he wandered in delirium, was ever of Sobèdè, and the "red chief" who had punished him undeservedly. The poor old man appeared to imagine that he was still giving evidence at the trial. In the early morning he tried to stand up, but fell back dead on his mat.

Manciya came over and buried his father, and then Mampitizili, with little Kungayè, accompanied him back to his kraal. Manciya was now the head of the family, and according to native custom the interests of Sobèdè

were vested in him for the time being. The cattle and goats were driven over, and the mats, calabashes, and other *lares* and *penates*, with the assegais and clubs of Sobèdè, were taken to Manciya's kraal. Mampitizili found herself disposed of as joint occupant, with Manciya's oldest and ugliest wife, of a large hut on the left-hand side of the cattle kraal.

For a time Mampitizili was left to herself, but within a few months she had come to find that all the inconvenience she had previously suffered was as nothing compared to what she now had to endure.

A rumour was set afloat to the effect that Sobèdè was dead; this at first caused her much terror, but when all efforts to trace it to its source had failed, Mampitizili ceased to give it much credence; nevertheless, it left a rankling thorn of uneasiness in her mind. Soon after this she began to see far more of Manciya than she liked, and then he commenced paying her attentions that were extremely distasteful. Among the many Jewish customs followed by the Kafirs is the one prescribed in the fifth verse of the twenty-fifth chapter of the book of Deuteronomy, and Manciya, assuming the report as to Sobèdè's death to be true, proposed to follow

this custom in Mampitizili's case. She, it may be stated, was an extremely attractive young woman. Manciya found himself repulsed with indignation over and over again. Then he began to try the effect of harsh and even cruel treatment where soft measures had failed.

The wife whose dwelling Mampitizili shared had been neglected by her husband for years, and was now savagely jealous of the attentions which he paid, in her hut and before her face, to a young, good-looking woman, and she accordingly gave full vent to her spite when she saw from Manciya's changed demeanour that it was safe for her to do so. Soon Mampitizili's life became one of continuous misery. It was through little Kungayè that she suffered most severely. The child was bullied or beaten every day by the other children, who were encouraged to torment him, and all attempts at defence or retaliation on the mother's part proved to be worse than useless. The hardest drudgery fell to Mampitizili's lot, and the worst food was her scanty portion, but all this she regarded as nothing in comparison with what she had to endure in respect of the treatment to which her child was subjected.

Sometimes she would manage to steal away and carry little Kungayè over to the old kraal, there to muse miserably over the short-lived happiness that she and Sobèdè had enjoyed. The three huts were falling into decay, the corn-pits in the kraal were full of water, and the whole place was overgrown with weeds. But here she had at least peace; the leering, libidinous eye of Manciya no longer affronted her, and she was free from the constant nagging of his jealous, spiteful wives. Here, moreover, little Kungayè could play in peace with the little toy oxen she had made for him out of mud, free from the persecution of his malevolent cousins.

As may have been inferred, it was Manciya who had for his own purposes set afloat the rumour as to Sobèdè's having died at the convict station. He knew that Sobèdè's return home might be expected in a few months, and he determined, therefore, to overcome Mampitizili's resistance to his amatory advances with as little further delay as possible. With this end in view he again changed his tactics, and began once more to treat her with kindness. Amongst other manifestations of this may be mentioned his

buying a gaudy blanket for her at a trader's, and his administration of a most unmerciful thrashing to her hut-companion—to whom, very unfairly, he had failed to notify the change in his tactics, and who inopportunely was guilty before his face of a spiteful act towards the object of his desires. Mampitizili felt grateful, but kept, nevertheless, strictly on her guard.

One day Manciya sent messages to the surrounding kraals inviting a number of his friends to a beer-drink. For some days previously every one had been kept busy grinding the "imitombo," or partly-germinated millet from which the beer is made, in large earthen pots. The banquet began early in the forenoon, and by the time the sun went down many heads had been broken, and all the revellers were extremely drunk. Shortly after nightfall Manciya staggered into the hut in which Mampitizili dwelt. The other woman was crouching at the central hearth over some faintly-glowing embers, and her he struck brutally with one of the door-poles which he had stumbled over. The woman rushed with a yell out of the hut, and Manciya began to grope about in the darkness for Mampitizili.

Mampitizili took in the situation at once. She was crouching against the wall at the back of the hut when Manciya entered, clasping little Kungayè close to her. Manciya passed her in his search, and she leaped to her feet and rushed out into the night with her child.

The unhappy woman at length felt that her burthen was greater than she could bear; —that she must get away from Manciya's kraal now and for ever,—even if she had to fling herself into the cold, dark, deep pool of the river just below the waterfall. But that might happen to-morrow; for to-night she would return to the old kraal, for the last time. She felt she would like to sleep once more in the hut that she and Sobèdè had occupied together. The season was late winter. She hurried on through the darkness with hot head and cold, bruised feet. The night was cloudless and still, and a heavy frost was settling down through the keen, crisp air. Soon the eastern sky began to whiten, and then the moon lit up the snowy masses of the Drakensberg rising abruptly to her left. The child shivered and clung to her mutely; he had acquired the habit of mutely enduring.

At length she reached the rocky ledge upon which the three huts stood, facing down the valley. Broken and dilapidated as they were, they seemed to her like a city of refuge and peace. The largest hut was that which stood in the centre facing the entrance to the stone cattle enclosure. Mampitizili approached this hut from the back, with faltering steps, half-blinded with her tears, and shaken by sobs wrung from the depths of her despair.

A portion of the wall of the hut had fallen in at one side, and, as Mampitizili passed the aperture thus formed, she uttered a cry and fell to the ground in terror, for a fire was alight in the centre of the hut, and a man with his back towards her lay next to it, half covered by a blanket.

IV

Sobèdè, after his sentence, was drafted with other convicted prisoners to the convict station at Port St. John's, on the coast of Pondoland and at the mouth of the Umzimvubu river. Here, every working day, he trundled a wheel-barrow filled with gravel at the bluff that was being broken down for

the purpose, and tipped it into the lagoon which, before it was thus filled up, wound sinuously through the little village. When each day's work was done, he was marched with the other convicts to the prison, which was built of galvanized iron on the flattened top of a sand-hill overlooking the deep blue wonder of the Indian Ocean, and the lovely river-mouth with its beetling cliffs and steep forest-fringed slopes. He was well fed and comfortably housed; the work was not heavy, nor were the working hours distressingly long. The only things that troubled him much, after the first wild, desperate feeling of being trapped had passed away, were the monotony of the life, the restraint, always so specially irksome to uncivilized man, and the longing to obtain news of his wife and child, of his father and his cattle.

The climate of Port St. John's, the gentle haze that seems to steal into the soul and allay every irritation, the health-giving breath and the commiserating murmur of the great ocean, all brought him peace. Thus the time passed more quickly and less painfully than he had expected. Moreover, he obtained the remission of six weeks for

each year of his sentence, such as is allowed to all well-conducted convicts whose sentences exceed a certain limit. Of the regulation authorizing this he and his family had been unaware.

At length he one day found himself a free man, with a clear conscience and in perfect health. In spite of having herded with evil-doers he came out of prison a better man than he had entered it. He had endured heavy tribulation without losing hope; he had never lost hold of his past and his future; he had instinctively and insensibly acquired a healthy philosophy under the stress of his unmerited misfortune.

Now he looked forward to meeting, within a few days, the wife, child, and father whom, in spite of his black skin and his uncivilized nature, he dearly loved. Conscious of his innocence and buoyant with hope, Sobèdè, as he walked down the hill from the convict station after his release, held his head erect and looked every man he met straight in the face. He was probably a better man than most of those who would have felt themselves contaminated by touching him.

It is a long day's walk from Port St. John's to Sidotè's location, and the whole course

lies up-hill. Sobèdè was, however, in perfect condition, and although he hurried on, walking all day long and half the night, he felt less and less fatigue the farther he went. The cold was severe in the higher altitudes, and he felt it considerably after his nearly three years spent at sea-level, but this he did not mind. His warm hearth, with Mampitizili and the child, who, he thought, must now be big and old enough to run about and talk, was waiting for him, and once there his troubles would all be forgotten.

Upon taking his discharge, a few shillings wherewith to buy food on his homeward journey had been given to him by the superintendent of the convict station. Of this money he spent hardly any. Natives are extremely hospitable to strangers, and all through Pondoland and the Xesibè country Sobèdè never lacked food to eat.

The last day of Sobèdè's journey dawned at last. His course now lay along a main road running over farms occupied by Europeans, so he met with hardly any people, nor did he see a single one whom he knew. Just before sundown he came to a wagon outspanned, the owner of which had just slaughtered a goat. Thinking it

probable that there would be no fresh meat at his kraal, Sobèdè invested a shilling of his maintenance-money in goat-flesh. He cut a hole in the lump of meat, stuck his stick through it, and carried it over his shoulder.

Sobèdè's kraal was situated almost on the verge of the Hlangweni location, and the footpath leading to it from the main road passed no other dwellings of men. It was sundown when he reached the point at which the footpath diverged, leading up the valley at the upper end of which the huts were built. His feet were worn and sore from the long walk, but he hurried along the steep, rugged course with firm nervous steps. It was almost dark when he began to ascend the short, steep lip of the ledge. It struck him as being strange that he had seen no signs of cattle or other animals, nor had he even heard the bark of a dog. Perhaps, he thought, those at the kraal had gone to sleep, and the dogs crept in under shelter from the cold. Of course, he was not expected for another four months, as his family knew nothing of the good-conduct remission.

He reached the top of the ledge; there sure enough, he could see the outline of each

hut in the shadow of the dark hill-side, beneath the faintly-gleaming western sky. —But what was the matter? Not only was there no sign of life, but he was surrounded by indications of desolation and decay. The weeds were growing thickly all around him. Sobèdè stepped forward with faltering steps and a sinking heart and made for the largest hut. He saw that the wall had partly fallen in on one side, the door had disappeared, and a gleam of stars showed through a ragged gap in the roof. Sobèdè flung himself to the ground before the threshold, and sobbed like a tired and despairing child.

He lay until the keen frost chilled him to the bone. Then he arose and began to search for fuel, which he found without any difficulty. Then he drew a little of the tinder-dry grass from the roof, and by means of his flint, steel, and touchwood, soon lit a fire on the cold and barren hearth. The hut was in a fearfully dilapidated and dirty state, but with a broom extemporized out of a small bush which he plucked outside, he swept the place out. Amongst the rubbish he found several of the little clay oxen which Mampitizili had made for Kungayè, and the sight of these formed a small nucleus of hope

in his mind, around which shreds of comfort began to gather. No doubt, he thought, Mampitizili and the old man had, for good and sufficient reasons, removed to Manciya's or to some other part of the location. To-morrow he would, no doubt, find them. To-night he felt far too weary, after the shock of his disappointment, to seek them even at Manciya's kraal. All the fatigues of the previous five days seemed to creep into his bones at once, and he felt, for the time being, completely crushed.

Sobèdè cooked a portion of the goat-flesh, ate it, and then laid himself down, wrapped in his blanket, at the side of the fire. The wind had completely died away, and the frosty night seemed tense with utter silence.

With the keen senses of his race Sobèdè became aware of an approaching footstep. It was not so much that he heard any sound, as that he felt a slight rhythmic tremor of the ground beneath him. The footstep drew nearer, and then the sound of sobbing could be heard. Sobèdè did not move; he was not in the slightest degree alarmed, and was far too weary and heartsore to feel interested in anything just then. Then he heard a cry and a sound as of some one falling heavily to the ground.

He arose, seized a burning stick from the fire, and went outside. He saw a woman crouching to the ground, with her face hidden in her hands. Clinging to her was a little child, who gazed up at Sobèdè with wide, terror-strained eyes. Sobèdè bent down and touched the woman on the shoulder, telling her to arise and have no fear. At the sound of his voice the woman looked up quickly with a start of recognition and a cry of joy, and Sobèdè saw that her face was the face of Mampitizili. Then he flung down the spent firebrand, and clasped his wife and son in a long, silent embrace.

Soon the three were sitting together in the hut, where the fire was now again blazing cheerfully;—the man and the woman with hearts too full for speech, and the child looking with wonder at the big stranger who did not treat him unkindly.

Mampitizili and Kungayè were faint from hunger, so the goat-flesh was soon cut into strips, roasted upon the embers, and eaten as a sort of sacrament of reunion. Then Sobèdè fetched water in a broken earthen pot from the little streamlet that babbled down the gully at the side of the ledge, and they washed out their mouths, Kafir fashion, and drank of the

icy-cold water, which seemed to taste more delicious than the best calabash-milk.

It was long before they could find words to express all that made big their hearts. Sobèdè heard of the death of his father with equanimity; the natives, with true philosophy, look upon the visitation of death to the old and infirm without regret. Bit by bit—the little boy sleeping peacefully at their feet as they talked—the whole shameful story of Manciya's conduct was told. But Sobèdè was too happy to be angry for long even under this provocation. His wife and child were safe with him, and he knew that Manciya dared not refuse to give up his cattle,—the headman and the magistrate would see to that. They decided to remain at the old kraal, and to commence repairing the huts on the following day.

Of all the myriad dwellings of men upon which the snowy peaks of the Drakensberg glanced down that night in cold disdain of man and his destinies, none held such happy human hearts as did this hut without a door, with the wall falling down in ruin, and through the gaping roof of which the frost fell from a wintry sky.

THE QUICK AND THE DEAD[1]

"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"—*Romans* vii. 24.

I

NOMFUNDA sat smoking his pipe alongside the fire he had lit close to the spring gushing out at the foot of the big cliff at the upper end of Krantz Vogel Kloof. The cliff arose sheer three hundred feet, and at each side of it the steep, broken terraces of the mountain, covered with huddled patches of immense boulders, swelled out into mighty flanks. From between the boulders gnarled and stunted trees grew, rooted in soil so deep down in the fissures that it could not be seen. Here and there dark, ragged-edged chasms yawned. These

[1] This story has appeared in the *South African Telegraph*.

boulder-patches were bordered by fringes of scrubby forest, outside which grew coarse, matted grass.

It was a hot day in late spring, and Nomfunda felt drowsy. The bleatings of a flock of sheep came faintly to his ear. His dog lay curled up at his feet. The day was at noon. A light breeze hushed faintly through the tree-tops, soothing as the whisper of Somnus, and then died away. Nomfunda slept.

Nomfunda was the shepherd of Sarel Marais, the proprietor of the farm which took its name from the thickly-wooded kloof at the head of which he, Nomfunda, lay sleeping. Sarel Marais had over and over again warned him not to come with his sheep to this neighbourhood, for the reason that animals were so apt to get lost in the broken ground through falling into the fissures; and Sarel's eldest son "Rooi Jan" —so called on account of his red hair—had sworn to have Nomfunda's life if he ever again disobeyed in this respect. However, on the present occasion Nomfunda felt safe, for old Sarel was absent from home, and "Rooi Jan" had only a few hours previously departed on horseback for a farm several

"hours" distant, where the girl he meant to marry in a few months' time resided.

The foot of the cliff where the spring gushed out had a peculiar fascination for Nomfunda. It was cool on the hottest day. The water plashed from under a jutting ledge and scattered moisture over luxuriant masses of fern. The "umgwenya," or "Kafir plum," grew plentifully in the forest close at hand, and the holes in the porous cliff were full of bees' nests brimming with the storage of industrious years. These bees were of the small, black, forest variety, which is celebrated as being extremely savage when interfered with; this fact, and the inaccessibility of the nests, accounted for their still being in existence. However, Nomfunda was an expert and daring honey-hunter, and was extremely pachydermatous; he hardly ever came to this spot without plundering a nest and feeding on honey to repletion.

Moreover, an antelope known as the "klipspringer" was to be found in large numbers in the neighbourhood, and Nomfunda's dog thoroughly understood the way to circumvent this animal. Sometimes, quite on its own account, the dog would drive a

buck to the point of some rock-pinnacle in the vicinity, and there hold it prisoner until Nomfunda, guided by the dog's baying, would hurry to the spot and knock the buck over with his knob-kerrie. This dog was an utter mongrel showing traces of extremely diverse canine types. Its enemies declared they could even see a great deal of the jackal in it. The dog was, however, utterly faithful to its master, and had a wonderful knack of bailing up "klipspringers." One peculiarity of the animal's was that it never barked.

When Nomfunda awoke it was to find "Rooi Jan," gun in hand, watching him. Nomfunda instinctively grasped his knob-kerrie, which lay on the ground next to him, and sprang to his feet. The dog ran behind its master and crouched, showing its teeth. "Rooi Jan" regarded Nomfunda in silence for some seconds, and Nomfunda returned his gaze. Then "Rooi Jan" spoke, using the Dutch language, which Nomfunda, who had worked among the Boers for several years, understood fairly well.

"Did I not tell you never to bring the sheep up here?"

"Ja, Baas."[1]

"Did I not tell you that if ever you did, I would shoot you for the d——d Kafir dog that you are?"

"Ja, Baas."

"Then," uttered "Rooi Jan," his face distorted with fury, and his voice coming in husky gasps, as he deliberately, one after the other, drew back the hammers of his double-barrelled gun, "to-day will I do it; to-day you are dead; to-day will your black carcase lie down among the rocks with the bones of the sheep that you——"

Nomfunda had all this time kept his eyes on the face of the enraged Boer, and when, blind and quivering, "Rooi Jan" lifted the gun to his shoulder, Nomfunda sprang to one side, whilst the charge of buck-shot passed so close to his head that he felt the wind of it. Then, as "Rooi Jan," cursing his own clumsiness, was again raising the gun to his shoulder, Nomfunda lifted his knob-kerrie and flung it with all his force. The heavy knob caught "Rooi Jan" on the left temple, and he fell backwards, and lay on the ground motionless.

Numfunda had no idea that "Rooi Jan"

[1] "Yes, Master."

was seriously injured. The first thing he did was to seize the gun and pitch it down the kloof into a very thick patch of fern. Then he picked up his kerrie, returned to the seat he had occupied when "Rooi Jan" arrived, and sat down to await developments. He knew he had done wrong, and was prepared, as natives generally are, to take his punishment like a man. The dog became very uneasy; it began to whine and cowered against its master, with ears cocked, tail tucked under, and hair on end all along the back.

Nomfunda sat for a long time wondering why "Rooi Jan" did not move. Then he stood up and examined the injured man, who had fallen on his back across a flat stone. His head lay back and his mouth was wide open. A very small trickle of blood came from his left temple, and dabbled his hair. Nomfunda plucked a delicate frond of fern and held it in front of "Rooi Jan's" gaping mouth and nostrils. It moved only to the trembling of the hand that held it.

For a long time Nomfunda could not realize what had happened; surely, he thought, a little wound like that could not cause death. Then the shadows began to

fall the other way, the brown hawks came screaming out of their nests in the cliff, and the bees came up the kloof in a steady stream. Still "Rooi Jan" lay motionless, the ghastly pallor of his face and stretched throat contrasting forcibly with the vivid red of his hair and beard. Large, blue flies buzzed round in ever-increasing numbers, and eventually a few of them settled on the nostrils and lips of the corpse. Then Nomfunda realized that his master's son was dead and that he had killed him.

The wretched man already felt the strangling rope around his neck. He was young and he loved his life. A flush of hope passed through him. No one saw the deed —he would hide the body down one of the clefts. No, that would not do; a search was sure to be made about here, and the smell would betray the hiding-place. The body must be hidden far away, high up on the mountain, in some secret place where it would never be discovered.

Nomfunda was of powerful build, and "Rooi Jan" had not been a very big man. The blood had long since ceased trickling, so after carefully removing the small quantity that had stained the stones, Nomfunda lifted

the corpse upon his shoulder and began ascending the steep mountain side. His course laid for the most part through cover, but he had now and then to emerge into comparatively open spaces. Each time, before doing this, he carefully reconnoitred, but not a human being was in sight in any direction. At length he reached the bleak and broken top of the mountain, and then he made straight for a small cavern he knew of, the mouth of which was concealed by shrubs. Here he laid the body, and after carefully re-adjusting the shrubs at the entrance, he returned to his sheep by a different course. The flock was scattered along the flanks of the mountain; he at once collected it and drove it down to the kraal at the homestead, where he arrived at the usual time. Then he joined the other servants in the hut wherein they dwelt together, cooked and ate his supper and laid himself down wrapped in his blanket,—just as though nothing had happened. But he lay awake during the whole night, thinking of "Rooi Jan," whilst the dogs howled weirdly beneath the unregarding stars.

II

The disappearance of "Rooi Jan" caused great surprise and uneasiness. He had left the homestead early in the morning after an early breakfast, with the avowed intention of visiting the farm of Jacob Venter, which was situated about fifteen miles away, and where the girl lived to whom he was engaged to be married. He meant to return during the afternoon of the same day. It now transpired that he had not reached Venter's farm. Each one of the servants, including Nomfunda, was closely questioned, but apparently nothing had been seen of the missing man since he disappeared riding along the road which scarped round the bluff just below the homestead, early in the morning. The spoor of his horse was traced along the road from here by an old Hottentot named Gezwint, who was celebrated as a tracker. This spoor was found to lead along the road for some distance, and then turn abruptly to the left towards the wooded kloof, at the upper end of which, four miles away, "Rooi Jan" had met his doom. It was late in the afternoon when the fact of the spoor turning out

of the road was discovered, and night fell before it could be traced to any distance worth speaking of from this point.

Next morning at daylight the tracking was resumed. Old Sarel Marais had been sent for, but had not yet arrived. Several of the neighbouring farmers had been sent for to come and assist in the search. The party on the spoor consisted of old Gezwint, "Rooi Jan's" younger brothers Piet and Willem—aged, respectively, fifteen and fourteen years—six young farmers, and several native farm servants. Old Gezwint worked like a blood-hound, deciphering almost invisible signs upon the rough, stony ground, and casting back whenever at fault. On again verifying the spoor after a check, he would call out "Hier's hij" ("Here he is"), and again run forward on the slot, followed at a respectful distance by the others, who left the real business of the tracking to his well-known skill. It was at about noon that they came upon "Rooi Jan's" grey mare, saddled and bridled, and tied to a tree deep in the bush. From this point they followed swiftly and without a check the slot of a boot up the kloof to the spring under the cliff. Here the spoor ceased. They found the

remains of a recent fire, and the tracks of naked human feet, and of a dog. Beyond this point a spoor was hardly to be hoped for because of the nature of the ground. They spent the rest of the day in searching among the rocky chasms, but when night fell they had found no further track, nor any sign of the missing man. Upon the search party reaching the homestead an hour later, it was found that the flock of sheep had not been brought back to the kraal, and that Nomfunda, the shepherd, was missing.

III

Nomfunda was herding his sheep on the open, grassy slope to the left-hand side of the kloof when the search party was at work. The day was clear and still, and he could tell the whereabouts of the trackers from the shouts which arose from time to time. As the trackers advanced towards the head of the kloof, Nomfunda drove his flock along the hill-side by a parallel course until the broken ground was almost reached. Then he darted past the flock, and taking a course still further to the right, through some scrub, he worked his round-about way to the

top of the cliff overhanging the scene of the tragedy. Here he lay down just above a jutting bush, through the branches of which he could see without being seen.

He saw the party emerge from the forest and disappear out of the range of his vision under the ledge where the spring gushed out. He could faintly hear the sound of voices, but without being able to distinguish the words. After a while he saw the men emerge and scatter about among the rocks, searching. He made sure they had found the gun, but had no fear just then of their being able to trace the body. It was almost dark when the party withdrew, but Nomfunda had been so absorbed in watching their operations that he had lost all recollection of his sheep. He had been in a state of complete fascination during the whole afternoon. Sometimes one or other of the searchers would take more or less the course along which the body had been carried up the mountain. When such happened, the unfortunate culprit would give himself up for lost: the cavern would inevitably be found and searched. Then the man who caused his uneasiness would proceed in another direction, and a joyous, unreasoning relief would take possession of the watcher,

only to be dissipated when one of the others would accidentally take the former course.

The stars came out one by one, and at length the last shred of daylight died out of the sky. Then Nomfunda sat up and considered. He had lain on the same spot and in the same position for hours and hours. He began to collect his wandering wits. He suddenly remembered his sheep. Why had he come up on the mountain at all? he asked himself in desperation. He could not now return, for it would be impossible for him to give an explanation of his absence. Why had he not returned with his flock at sundown? Fool, fool—thus to tie the rope around his own neck. No, it would never do to return. He must escape;—but where to? The alarm had been given; he was known to everybody in the neighbourhood, and all would now be on the watch after he had practically admitted his guilt by remaining away from the homestead just when he ought to have been most particular to avoid any conduct calculated to cause suspicion. No, he must remain on the mountain,—for some time at all events. He had his day's ration with him, but it was still untouched, for all day long he had been unable to eat. He

was now hungry, but he determined to keep the food for the morrow. The dog had lain quietly next to him all day; its ears were cocked, its dilated nostrils were continuously working, and the ridge of hair along the back was still erect.

Next morning's dawn found Nomfunda still lying at the edge of the cliff, and the searchers again at work among the fissures. It was, they made sure, in one or the other of these that the body of "Rooi Jan" would be found concealed. Since the disappearance of Nomfunda, everybody was certain he had murdered the "Klein Baas,"[1] as "Rooi Jan" was called. The whole forenoon was wasted on the lower parts of the mountain. Nomfunda still lay on the top of the cliff and watched the searchers. He now suffered from a burning thirst, but until nightfall he must endure this physical, in addition to his mental misery.

Early in the afternoon a shrill yell of "Hier's hij" arose from Gezwint, the old sleuth-Hottentot. He had again found the spoor. All that could be seen was a frayed pad of lichen on a sloping stone, higher up than any of the other searchers had reached.

[1] "Little Master."

From this stone the spoor was taken on slowly and with difficulty until sundown, by which time it had been verified to the very top of the mountain, and within about four hundred yards of where the haggard watcher lay, enduring more than the agonies of death, at his post on the edge of the cliff.

But the spoor could then be traced no further, and the nature of the ground rendered it extremely unlikely that any more tracks would be found. The top of the mountain was composed of flat stones lying closely together, and bare even of lichen.

At nightfall the searchers again returned to the homestead, and Nomfunda hurried down the mountain to the spring, from which he drank his fill of the pure, cold, delicious water, the dog lapping next to him. Then he again ascended the mountain, stepping carefully from stone to stone so as to avoid making a spoor. In places where the stones were not continuous he carried the dog in his arms. He knew the animal was a source of danger to him, and he thought of tying its mouth up and its legs together and cutting its throat, but he remembered that the signs of the deed would be so much more to conceal, and, moreover, he could not endure the

thought of the utter loneliness which would be his lot without the dog's companionship.

At midnight Nomfunda was sitting on a stone near the very summit of the mountain. The place where the body was concealed was about half-a-mile from him. The night was cold, but he did not feel any inconvenience although clothed only in a threadbare cotton blanket. He had been for two days almost without food, and for three nights he had not slept, yet he knew neither hunger nor fatigue. Just then he felt fairly comfortable. He was quite easy in his mind about the body; it would never be found—none of the searchers would ever dream of looking in that cave—probably none of them even knew of its existence. . . . . Nomfunda sprang to his feet and gasped for breath, whilst his very heart seemed to freeze in his breast. Had he not *himself* shown this very cave to young Piet, "Rooi Jan's" brother, one day when they together were seeking strayed horses about two years ago? Fool, and again fool! Why had he hidden the body there? Talking over the events of the day down at the homestead, young Piet had probably by this told the others about the cave. It was certain to be visited next day—probably early in the

morning. What was there to be done? An unspeakable solution of the difficulty kept suggesting itself, but he drove the frightful notion from him over and over again. At length it overwhelmed him like the slime of a serpent that drenches a crushed victim about to be swallowed. He must enter the charnel cave, and remove the body to some other hiding-place. But the horror of it! There is nothing so horrifying to a native as having to handle a dead body. . . . "Rooi Jan" had been dead nearly three days. . . . He felt through every fibre of his tortured being that he could *not* do this thing. But he *must*. The body must not be found. Until the body were found there was only suspicion against him; not proof. Yes, *it* must be done, so get it over quickly and then laugh at danger. He caught up the dog again in his arms and fled, leaping from stone to stone, towards the cave. Before he reached it he had made up his mind as to what he should do with the corpse. There was another cave in an adjoining mountain about four miles away, and in a very inaccessible place. Fool, and again fool, not to have thought of this spot in the first instance.

Nomfunda reached the mouth of the cave and, throwing down the dog, burst through the bushes into the charnel-house. He tore a strip off his blanket and tied it over his mouth and nostrils. Then he caught up the body, which lay horribly limp in his arms. He seemed to be endowed with more than human strength. The frightful *thing* seemed to cling to him as it lay across his shoulders, and one loosely-hanging hand patted him gruesomely on the bare flesh of his flank with rhythm corresponding to his steps. His course led over bare, flat, rocky ledges. Here and there he sat down to rest. He noticed that the dog, although it followed, did not come near him. Day was just breaking when he reached the other cave. He entered at once, and placed the body in a cleft at the further extremity, piling up stones, which he felt for in the darkness, against it. One of these slipped down, and Nomfunda thought he heard the body move. He gave a wild shriek and rushed outside. It was broad daylight. The dog heard his steps and ran forward to meet him. When it caught sight of his face the dog stopped short and stood rigid with uplifted paw, and a tingling ridge of hair erected along its

back. Then it gave a terrible howl, turned, and fled. It never returned to him.

All day long the wretched Nomfunda lay beneath the undermined bank of a donga. Reeds and long grass concealed his hiding-place. When night fell, he again visited the spring, drank his fill of water, and plundered a bees' nest in the cliff, from which he had only recently removed nearly all the honey. The combs were now full of bee-bread and young bees. These were better as food for him just then than mere honey would have been. After this he re-ascended the mountain and again concealed himself in the donga, where he fell into a deep sleep. This was the first time he had slept since the death of "Rooi Jan." He was awakened early in the forenoon of the next day by voices. The speakers stood so close that he could hear what they were saying. Their speech was to the effect that in the event of the present day's search proving unsuccessful they would on the following day overhaul the adjacent mountain, in which it was known that several caves existed. The wretched listener nearly expired from sheer terror. When night fell he emerged from his den and hurried to the

second sepulchre of "Rooi Jan." The body must again be removed. The moon was new and sank soon after the sun. He reached the cave and grovelled upon the ground before the entrance in terror and anguish. But the awful deed had to be done. He entered; the air was horribly fœtid. One by one, with dreadful groanings, he dragged away the piled-up stones, and then, trying to hold his breath, he bore the corpse out into the pure air of the spring night. Then, shutting his teeth tight, he lifted the swollen horror to his shoulders and carried it in the direction of its former resting-place. He knew of another secret spot—a deep cleft near the edge of the cliff overhanging the spring. He reached this spot with his ghastly burthen just before dawn. He rolled the body into the cleft and covered it with small bushes and handfuls of grass which he pulled out. After this he concealed himself in another cleft in the vicinity.

Shortly after daybreak he saw the searchers again ascending the kloof, one of them leading his dog by a rein fastened to its neck. They passed over the mountain to his left, and he did not again see them until they returned in the evening. About midday he

saw his dog, which had evidently escaped, running as hard as ever it could down the mountain towards the homestead, with the rein trailing from its neck.

Nomfunda remained three weeks upon the mountain, and nine separate times he took the body of "Rooi Jan" on his shoulders at the last hiding-place, and, limping on lacerated and bleeding feet, removed it to another. The moon grew night by night in soft splendour, and looked down upon the awful spectacle of a putrid human corpse being carried from place to place by a human being. The tempest wrapped the mountain in flame and roarings, and the rain-charged wind buffeted the quick and the dead thus linked together by a gruesome prank of Fate. The pure breath of the midnight mountain breeze hurried on to rid itself of the taint left by the gross gases of mortality which the earth should have sealed up in its transmuting alembic, and the clear mountain height, sacred to the most cleanly influences of Nature, was polluted by the ghoul-wanderings of a terrific creature bearing an unspeakable burthen, whom horror had deprived of the semblance of humanity.

* * * * *

The sequel to this narrative may be found in the records of a certain Circuit Court and the (more or less) thirty-year-old files of some Colonial newspapers. It may therein be read how old Gezwint was perplexed by the fresh spoors which he found from time to time; these sometimes showing signs of blood. Further, how the searchers eventually determined to remain on the mountain by night, where they then scattered about in pairs; how two of the searchers, concealed one night near a certain footpath, were startled by the sound of heavy groanings, followed by the rustle of staggering footsteps and an awful stench; how they then captured Nomfunda carrying what had once been the body of "Rooi Jan" Marais. He made no resistance, and they led him away to prison. His aspect was such as to strike dread into all who beheld him.

It may also be ascertained from the same sources how Nomfunda was tried for murder by a jury composed of Dutch farmers, found guilty without any recommendation to mercy, and sentenced to be hanged by the neck till he was dead; how a certain minister of the United Presbyterian Church obtained access to the condemned man, heard

his story, believed it, went to the scene of the initial tragedy, and found "Rooi Jan's" gun where it was still concealed, with one barrel empty and one yet loaded; how representations were made to the proper quarter with the effect that the death-sentence was commuted to imprisonment for life. One somehow fails to see clearly either the justice or mercy of this particular commutation. Possibly Nomfunda is still serving out his sentence.

AIĀLA

I

I PROMISED Lourens Brand not to tell the tale of his strange adventure and its stranger consequences until at least ten years should have elapsed from the date of his departure from South Africa, and the promise has been kept in the spirit if not in the letter. Poor Brand never left South Africa—in the flesh, at least. His bones lie buried in an unfenced graveyard, near the deserted site of an old mining camp in the north of the Transvaal, where he died of fever in 1885.

Brand was a Dutchman ; his family established itself generations back in Java, and several of his ancestors were prominent officials under the old Dutch East India Company. He had a dash of Malay blood in his veins—his great-grandfather having married the daughter of one of the Singapore

rajahs in the last century. This, however, one would never have suspected from his appearance, for he was tall and blonde, with blue eyes, and the presence and bearing of a sea-king. His disposition was diffident and somewhat retiring, and his Eastern blood showed itself in a certain dreaminess and a tendency to dwell rather on the occult than the obvious properties and relations of the things around him. He was a mechanical engineer by profession.

Brand landed in Cape Town in the early autumn of 188—, and took lodgings in the house where I was boarding. This was on the Sir Lowry road, not far from the Castle. We struck up an intimacy almost immediately. He had been educated at Leyden, and had returned to Java, meaning to practise his profession there, but the scope was too small for a man of his energetic disposition, so he came to South Africa in the hope of obtaining employment in some mine. He spoke the Malay language perfectly, and could quote copiously from the Malay version of the Koran.

One thing must, for the adequate understanding of this tale, be laid stress on. Brand, although twenty-six years of age, had

never strayed in the fields where the wild oats grow. His nature was passionate in its depths, but the passion still slept. It was probably an innate fastidiousness combined with a strong sense of shame that kept his feet in the path of purity. Be this as it may, the fact remains that although he had lived in the East, where, they tell us, Galahads are uncommon, Brand had never kissed a woman except his mother and sisters. As regards religion, he was what is known as an agnostic.

It was on the second day after arriving in Cape Town that Brand went down to the docks to see about the landing of some of his effects from the steamer. As it happened, another steamer had just arrived from the east coast ports, bringing a cargo of Malay pilgrims on their return journey from Mecca, and a lot of the pilgrims' friends had come to meet and greet them. A number of cabs with Malay drivers were standing about on the wharf, and in one of these Brand noticed, sitting by herself, a young Malay girl of such rare beauty that it could not be concealed by the formless hideousness of the local Malay garb. The driver had gone on board the steamer to greet some of his friends, and left the cab to take care of itself.

The cab was close to the rail-track, and as Brand stood looking at the girl he heard the warning whistle of a dock-engine which was rapidly approaching. The startled horse moved a few paces forward and again stood, this time right on the rail-track. Nothing could now save the cab, but Brand sprang forward, lifted the girl in his arms, and sprang with her out of danger just an instant before the vehicle and the hapless horse were crushed into a mass of hopeless ruin.

The girl was, of course, terribly frightened, and she clung convulsively to her preserver. He spoke to her reassuringly in the Malay language, which, strange to say, she appeared to understand perfectly. With the exception of the priests, very few of the Cape Town Malays understand the Malay tongue, they having adopted a very corrupt dialect of Dutch. He was more than ever struck by her beauty. Her figure was effectually concealed by her dress, but she was tall, and her head, which had become freed from the head-dress when she was being dragged out of the cab, was small, delicately moulded, and gracefully poised over a pair of shapely shoulders, on a neck like the stem of an asphodel. Her colour was very light, her face was a pure oval, and

between her shaded eyelids lurked the most wonderful depths of dark, liquid brown that ever drowned the reason of a man.

After being effusively thanked by the girl's friends, who had now come with a swarm of others from the steamer, Brand took his leave of her with a certain twinge of regret. The girl's eyes were to him henceforth an abiding remembrance.

It was about a month after the rescue of the girl that Brand's strange adventure took place.

It was now winter of the year of the small-pox epidemic. The streets of Cape Town at the lower levels were slushy as only Cape Town streets can be, for the rain had been falling steadily for ten days. Then followed a day and a night of absolutely cloudless and unseasonably warm weather, and it was on the night in question that Brand took the walk which had such remarkable consequences.

Brand, another man, and I dined together at the club. The other man had arrived by the last mail steamer from England, and he and I had booked to start by the up-country train at half-past ten. Our luggage was safe at the railway-station, and having

nothing to do for the moment, it was suggested that we might take a walk to some of the higher levels where we would be comparatively free of the mud, and from where we might obtain a good view of Table Mountain and the city lights. We accordingly lit our pipes and wandered forth.

There is always much to fascinate in the streets of a strange city, and the Cape Town streets at night, filled as they are with men and women of all shades of colour, garbed variously and speaking divers tongues, are especially interesting—at all events to any one with an imagination.

On this night the streets possessed an unusual attraction of a weird and impressive kind, for the small-pox epidemic was at its greatest height, and a brooding terror overshadowed the stricken city. Every one abroad seemed to have a furtive look. When two met near a lamp-post startled glances were exchanged, and in hurrying along the pavements the passers sheered off to avoid one another. Every now and then an empty coffin would be seen being hurried along the middle of the street upon men's shoulders. The few cabs on the almost deserted stands looked like hearses, their

occupation was almost gone for the time being, for hardly a soul would venture into a cab for fear of infection.

We strolled down Adderley Street for some distance, and then, turning to the left, went up Long Market Street, across St. George's and Long Streets, and on until we found ourselves in the Malay quarter on the slope at the base of the Lion's Rump. Here silence and desolation reigned supreme. The moon had now arisen, so on reaching half-way up the ascent we paused to examine the view and to take breath. Looking back we saw the gleaming city stretched like a vast necropolis under the crags of the great mountain, which gleamed silvery in the moonlight. To our left opened the glassy expanse of Table Bay, with the breakwater lights glinting on the water. From the Malay graveyard on the hillside above us came the shrill howls of the mourners. There was not a breath of wind. Owing to the comparative suspension of traffic the city seemed silent as the grave.

We retraced our steps for a short distance, and then, turning to the right, walked along a deserted street of white, flat-topped, sepulchre-like houses. All at once we became

aware of a sound of loud wailing going on in a house to our left. We stood still for a space and listened. The shrill treble of a woman's cry could be distinguished, and also the quavering tones of an old man's voice, full of the deepest agony. We drew near the house very softly. The windows were covered by dark venetian shutters, between the slats of which a dim light could be discerned. The house was one of a row all more or less similar in size and shape, and built touching each other. Each house had a paved "stoep" in front, with a masoned seat at either end. Against the house next to the one in which the wailing was going on, was standing a ladder which just reached the top of the parapet.

After listening for a few moments we moved quietly away and continued our course along the street. Soon we turned again to the right, and afterwards to the left. Eventually we found that we had lost ourselves. We wandered about helplessly for some time, getting into blind alleys and streets that led nowhere, and thus having to retrace our steps over and over again. Quarter by quarter the hour was chimed from the belfry tower of the far-away

Dutch church, and when ten o'clock struck, and we were still lost, the situation looked serious for us who required to catch the train in half-an-hour.

Just after this, however, we found ourselves in the street where we had listened to the wailing, and soon the rumbling of an approaching cab was heard. After being hailed, the driver, an Irishman of even more than average volubility, swore with fervour that his cab had never, since it was turned out with its first coat of varnish from the very best workshop in the whole of South Africa, had a "dirty Malay" sitting across its axle (it was from Malays that the infection was mostly dreaded); that the vehicle was known throughout the length and breadth of Cape Town as "the white man's cab"; that if we weren't too proud to take a look at the panel, we would find the cab's name, "The Blanche," in "purty gould letthers." Of course "ivry wan" who was educated knew *that* to mean just "white," and nothing else in the English language.

So we bade Brand farewell and were driven, smoking germicidically, to the railway-station, which we reached just in time to catch the train.

II

Brand strolled slowly down the street and again stopped before the house of sorrow, where the wailing had now ceased. Yielding to a reprehensible impulse of morbid curiosity he approached the shuttered window, where light still faintly gleamed, and endeavoured to find an aperture through which he could see into the house. By looking upwards between the diagonally-fixed slats he could see the ceiling, but the lower areas of the chamber were quite out of the range of his vision. Listening carefully, he seemed to hear a smothered sob and then a sigh. One of those unaccountable impulses that grip men by the throat sometimes, and make them do to their own undoing things which under ordinary circumstances they would never dream of attempting, then overcame him, and he felt that, come what may, he must see the inside of that room. He caught hold of the shutter and gently tried to open it, but the outside leaf was firmly bolted to the window-sill, and could not be moved. However, in passing his hand over the slats he found that one was slightly loose and

yielded to pressure. He pressed this slat and it slid upwards and inwards, leaving a space of about an inch and a half in width through which he could look.

The room was one of medium size, with a fire-place at one end. A lamp hung from the ceiling and distributed a dim light. The papered walls were of a deep crimson hue, and the floor was covered with Indian mats. A very large cushioned divan draped with dark green silk stood before a curtained recess in the opposite wall, and a large open volume lay upon a Koran stand of black wood inlaid with mother-of-pearl. A number of feminine garments, principally of silk, lay about the room in disorder.

Sitting on the divan and facing the window was a young girl, apparently a Malay; and although her face was partly covered by her hands, Brand could see that she was very lovely. Judging by her figure she looked to be about seventeen years of age. She was bent forward with her elbows resting on her knees, and her long black hair hung down in a rolled sheaf over one side of her bosom. Her neck, arms, and legs below the knees were bare, and of the most delicate symmetry. Her only clothing appeared to be a short

petticoat and bodice, both of red silk delicately embroidered with white, and a pair of richly-worked sandals. Her skin was even lighter than that delicate, slightly dusky tint usually only found in pure-bred Malay girls and young boys.

Brand withdrew from the window with a flush of shame at his dishonourable conduct, and stood in the middle of the street. The huge bulk of Table Mountain loomed sheer before him, transfigured by the white splendour of the moonlight,—a faint film of mist hanging motionless over its highest western buttress. A gentle breeze was now streaming from the south-east. This, flowing over the city, bore to his ear a low and confused murmur of belated life. From the grave-yard high on the hill-side above him still pierced the shrill cadences of the mourners. Then an indescribable feeling of oppression came over him, a sort of hopeless sense of the mystery overshadowing Man and his destinies—Death, the falling of the awful veil that men, since the beginning of Time, had been trying to pierce with their agonized prayers. The God who dwelt behind it and made no sign—what did it matter what He were called—Jehovah or Allah—whether the favoured interpreter

of His laws to men were called Christ or Mahomet, or whether the broken heart sobbed out its yearning appeal from the church pew, or from the carpet on the pavement of a mosque?

Did men tell truth when they declared that they could realize His existence with absolute certainty? Where in this world of shows and shadows might a humble seeker happily find—not Him—that were too much to hope for—but some sacred, authentic shred from the hem of His divine robe? Just then from the tower of the adjacent mosque pealed out the clear voice of a priest calling the faithful to prayer. Brand smiled wearily—prayer, in the sense of communion with the object prayed to, was as unintelligible to him as colour to one born blind.

These impassive house-fronts that he passed in his slow, absorbed stroll—what a dark, persistent stream of life trickled from eternity to eternity behind them. These Malays of the Cape, although they had shed their language like an outworn garment on the wayside, and had adapted an alien tongue to their needs, had they not kept their previously adopted faith, their customs, and their prejudices intact? What strange quality

was it in Mahometanism that rendered it so easy to grasp and so difficult to let go? What curiosity was aroused in respect of the family life of the Malay, which he has guarded so jealously from the ken of the European who rules him from the next street. Yet, as Brand knew, the dwellers in these tomb-like houses hoped and feared very much on the same lines as did the other children of men. And how much alike was not all human nature after all? The scene he had just witnessed, was it not thoroughly and ordinarily feminine in all its detail—from the careful manner in which the sheaf of opulent hair was rolled and tied to prevent it tangling, to the petulant tap of the sandalled foot on the floor, and the way the girl threw herself on the divan? Yes, the great beginning and the great end, with the devious way and the changeful weather between—the way so smooth for some and so rough for others, but with the one splendid flower blooming for all by the wayside—the triple mystery of birth and love and death—was it not all common to him and to the alien dwellers in these silent streets? Then the present terror of the pestilence made manifest in the solitude by the wails of the mourners smote him to

the heart with a sense of exalted sympathy, and a deep pity for the stricken people came home to him.

Brand, absorbed in his reflections, had unwittingly wandered back some distance down the deserted street, and he now turned back with the intention of returning to his lodgings. As he drew near the house of sorrow for the third time, he again noticed the ladder leaning against the parapet next door, and the impulse seized him to climb to the top and see what the city looked like from there. This impulse he immediately and unthinkingly yielded to. Stepping from the ladder he stood for a space on the flat roof of masonwork behind the parapet. Then he walked softly towards the back and looked down into the yards behind the row. Here, as in the street, everything seemed to be frozen into white silence.

The roof of the house next to Brand on his left was about three feet higher than the one he was standing on, and was separated from it by a parapet rising a foot higher still. He vaulted over the latter and walked on for some yards; then he again stood still and regarded the view. After a pause of a few moments he turned and retraced his steps,

meaning now to descend and return to his lodgings without further delay. When, however, he reached the place where he had ascended he found to his alarm and perplexity that the ladder had disappeared.

It seemed most extraordinary. He had not heard a sound or seen a living soul. He glanced up and down the street; all was vacant and as still as death. Then the awkwardness and danger of his situation came home to him in full force. What was he to do? The descent to the street was nearly twenty feet, that into the back-yard rather more, but might be broken by taking advantage of a sort of out-house built as a lean-to against the main building. But in the yard he would be like a rat in a trap. The yards at each side appeared to be all more or less constructed on the same principle. His position was truly a desperate one, and he knew this perfectly well. Most unfounded accusations had been made against the Malays, to the effect that they were maliciously endeavouring to spread the disease among the Europeans by means of infected clothing. Indignation on this account ran high, and would no doubt be ruthlessly vented on any European found in such an extremely equivocal position as he

was now in. Inwardly cursing his folly, he took off his boots, remounted the roof to his left, and began walking along the tops of the houses in the hope of discovering some means of escape.

After passing over the roofs of four houses he noticed that there seemed to be a considerable drop to the roof of the next. He approached this, and to his horror there arose before him from behind the parapet, the dark, bearded face of a man who held a gleaming knife in his teeth.

Brand turned and fled just as the man sprang over the parapet. As he did so he heard a rough, guttural exclamation behind him, and the sound of pursuing footsteps. As he sprang down to the roof of the house he had ascended at, he heard his pursuer fall with a heavy thud on the hard masonwork.

Brand rushed on, and when he reached the roof of the next house he noticed a curious cowl-shaped wooden structure, something like that which covers the approach to the forecastle ladder on the deck of a ship. He quickly turned and took refuge in this on the chance of his pursuer, who had not yet reappeared, and who was most probably lying

stunned from his fall, going past it. When, however, he entered the cowl the floor gave way almost noiselessly beneath him, and he fell through nearly twenty feet of space, with a thud on what seemed to be a pile of tumbled clothing. He lay half stunned for a few seconds, and then sat up. He found himself in complete darkness. A sound of low muttering reached his ear, but from what direction it came he could not tell, and a strange smell suggestive somewhat of incense was strongly perceptible.

Searching in his pockets Brand managed to find a match, which he struck on his boot. He found himself in a small room out of which one doorway led. On the floor, which was of clay, was a heap of clothing of all sorts, interspersed with bedding and mats, all thrown together in the greatest confusion. He made for the door and turned the handle softly. The leaf swung towards him. Passing into the doorway with his hands outstretched, he groped forward and came in contact with the heavy folds of a curtain, which he gently drew aside.

A blaze of white light nearly blinded him. He found himself on the threshold of a room about twenty feet square. From the ceiling

a large brazen lamp hung, and other lamps with burnished reflectors shone from each of the four walls. On a low bier in the centre of the room lay the dead body of a young man clad in green robes, his face frightfully disfigured from the effects of small-pox. At the head and foot of the bier stood braziers on which scented woods were burning, and the almost invisible fumes which arose caused the smell which he had perceived.

Crouching on the ground at the foot of the bier was an old man clad in a cassock-like garment of dingy green alpaca. He was bent and decrepit-looking, and he swayed slowly from side to side repeating some words softly in a high-pitched, quavering tone. His long, white beard and bald head were plentifully strewn with ashes, and his disordered turban of green silk was thrown upon the floor next to him.

Brand gazed spell-bound for a moment at the strange spectacle. The old man's profile was towards him. Then words in an unknown dialect were hoarsely shouted by some one on the roof, evidently at the aperture through which Brand had made his entrance. The old man slowly turned his head in the direction of the curtained door,

and Brand then saw that he was stone blind.

At the opposite side of the room was another door also curtained, so Brand, hearing a sound as though some one was descending through the aperture by means of a ladder, crossed the room, stepping noiselessly upon the soft carpet. He passed close to the head of the bier, pushed the curtain to one side, opened the door, and entered the room into which he had been looking from the street.

The girl started up from the divan with a smothered cry and gazed wildly at the intruder. To his intense surprise he recognized in her the one whose life he had saved on the wharf.

The girl evidently recognized him as well, for she checked the cry upon her lips, and the terror faded out of her face. Brand closed the door softly behind him, and then advanced towards her, his hands stretched out with a gesture of appeal. As he did this he whispered in the Malay tongue:

"Save me, for God's sake; they want to kill me."

Just then a movement was heard in the next room, and immediately afterwards could be distinguished the hoarse, guttural tones

which Brand associated with the bearded man who carried the knife between his teeth, and whose pursuit had filled him with such terror. The eyes of the girl softened; she hesitated for a second, and then hurriedly motioned to Brand to hide himself in the recess next to the divan. When he had effected this she laid herself down in her former position.

No sooner had this happened than the door opened, and some one, from the voice evidently a woman, entered the room. After discussing rapidly for a few seconds in Dutch so corrupt that Brand could barely understand a word here and there, this person left, closing the door behind her. Then a noise as of many people moving about on the roof, the pavement, and at the back of the premises arose. This, however, soon died down, and dead silence, only broken from time to time by a groan or a cry from the old mourner, again reigned.

After an interval the girl arose, turned the lamp down low, and whispered to Brand to emerge from his concealment. He had now completely regained his self-possession, and he fully expected to be able to escape from the house with the girl's assistance, without much difficulty or delay. She had now put

on a loose skirt, and wrapped a white, silken shawl over her shoulders and bosom.

Brand told her the exact truth as to the circumstances under which he had entered the room, and the girl evidently believed him. He thanked her warmly for what she had done, and begged of her to show him a way by which he might make his escape. This, however, she declared, to his horror, she was absolutely unable to do. The window was, she assured him, fastened down with nails, and the only other way of possible exit lay through the room in which the corpse was lying, and thence through a passage to the front door. This course was obviously impossible under the circumstances, so there was nothing for it but for him to remain where he was until the following morning, and then take advantage of circumstances as they might arise.

The recess in the wall was about two feet deep, and in this the girl made a sort of a couch for her uninvited and unwilling guest, who lay awake throughout the whole of the long July night, cursing his folly, and wondering as to what the end of his adventure was to be. The girl lay on the divan close to him, and although she hardly moved, Brand

could tell from her breathing that she was as sleepless as himself.

Soon after daybreak the girl arose and, speaking softly, told Brand to lie quietly where he was whilst she went out to see if the coast were clear. Soon after this the sounds of people moving about the house could be heard, and then a deadly feeling of being trapped took possession of the concealed man. Had it not been for the certainty of compromising the girl he would have risked the worst and burst his way through the window. He felt, of course, that after her heroic conduct in shielding him at terrible risk to herself, such a course would be unpardonable, and he dismissed the idea at once. By and by the noise in the next room increased; the heavy, shuffling tread of several men could be heard, and the wailing of the old mourner rose to a high pitch. Then came stillness. The body of the dead hadji had been carried away to be prepared for burial.

After another interval the girl returned, and in a whisper told Brand to follow her. Then she sped swiftly through the curtained room and into a passage to the left; then down this passage to the right, and out into a small courtyard, on the opposite side of

which a detached building stood. This building was double-storied at one end. The girl darted across the yard into the detached building, and Brand followed her through the half-opened door. He found himself in a sort of lumber store, which contained, amongst other things, a large number of packing-cases piled one over the other. In obedience to a gesture on the part of the girl, Brand entered a second room through a doorway standing open just in front of him. Here he found himself in semi-darkness. The girl closed the door behind him, and then ran quickly back across the yard to the house.

Brand's eyes soon accustomed themselves to the gloom, and then he began to examine his prison. He found here also a number of packing-cases, some apparently full of merchandise and others containing bound volumes of the Koran in the Malay tongue. In the corner of the room stood a ladder, and immediately above it an open trap-door, evidently leading to an upper chamber. He mounted the ladder and soon found himself in a small, cheerful-looking room with a window at either side. It contained a small table, a chair, and a bracket which hung

in one of the corners. A thick, new carpet was on the floor, and on one side were heaped a number of rich rugs which had evidently not been woven in Western looms. On the bracket stood a jug of water, a loaf of bread, some baked meat, and a small quantity of fruit. Brand closed the trap-door, took a long drink of water,—which he had been longing for,—and flung himself down upon the pile of rugs.

The morning was for Brand one deadly monotony of apprehension. Once only did he hear any evidence of movement below, and then it was the sound of a footstep followed by the light click of some metal utensil being placed on the floor. Just afterwards he cautiously lifted the trap-door and looked down. He saw a bucket containing water, a rough towel, and a piece of soap. He had heard the sound of the key being turned in the door, so he descended and had a refreshing wash. After this he re-ascended to the upper room, taking a copy of the Koran with him. What he saw when he looked out of the windows was not reassuring. The building stood at one side of a closed yard of small size but with very high walls. It was quite certain that there

was no means of exit except through the house. Even could he cross these walls he knew from his recollection of what he had seen from the roof that his position would be no better. The trapped feeling overcame him again, and he threw himself on the floor in despair.

Early in the afternoon he heard the door below opened softly, and just afterwards the girl ascended through the trap-door. She brought some food,—a few hard-boiled eggs, a dish of meat cooked after the Malay fashion in a paste, and some dates. Brand's first question was as to the practicability of his escaping, but the girl strongly negatived the idea of any attempt in that direction being made for the present. The house was, she said, so arranged that until some occasion arose upon which all the dwellers except the old priest were absent, he could not possibly get away without being discovered. She seated herself on the rug next to him and they talked together like old friends. He ascertained from her that he was on the premises of a very celebrated Malay priest,—the girl's grandfather. This was a wealthy man, who combined commerce with the practice of official religious functions.

Two of his sons had managed his business concerns, which had principally to do with the importation of silken fabrics from the East. One of the sons had died of the pest, and the other was away on a trading trip to Madagascar. The dead body which Brand had seen was that of the old priest's youngest and favourite son, a promising young hadji of highly reputed sanctity, who had returned but a few weeks previously from Mecca, only to be smitten by small-pox in its deadliest form. Altogether four members of the family had died,—one an elderly widowed daughter of the old priest, and the other a female servant.

Brand also learned her own history, which was peculiar and interesting. Her name was Aiāla. Her father had been an Englishman who, on being converted to Islam, had married a daughter of the old priest. This accounted for her knowledge of European ways and her sympathetic apprehension of European modes of thought, both of which had puzzled Brand extremely. After her father's death, two years previously, she had left Java and had come to Cape Town to join her grandfather. She had been very unhappy in her new surroundings ; the local

peculiarities of the Malays were distasteful to her; she could hardly understand anything of their speech. They, divining her contempt for them, and recognizing her superiority, disliked her intensely. She made no friends, and the only one who had treated her with sympathy or kindness was the young hadji who was now dead. To him she had been much attached. She had recently been promised in marriage to a man for whom she had no regard of any kind, and who was much older than she was.

Before leaving, the girl made Brand solemnly promise, with his hand on the Koran, that he would make no attempt to escape without her co-operation. She reminded him of the terrible risk she ran in thus hiding him, and that discovery would undoubtedly result in his death and her ruin. His disappearance was, she said, a mystery to the whole neighbourhood. He had been seen by others on the roof, and an organized hunt had accordingly taken place. The black-bearded man was continually on the watch, and had sworn, if he could find him, to have the stranger's life. Brand, after some hesitation which she overcame by falling at his feet in tears, made the promise

she demanded, and regretted having done so immediately afterwards.

Aiāla returned late that night and sat in the chair before the window, with the moonlight shining on her beautiful face, and flashing back in softened and enriched splendour from the depths of her glorious eyes. Her proximity began to engender strange emotions in Brand, and to make some unsuspected springs stir in the depths of his being. Perhaps it was that the Malay strain in his blood had given a certain fibre to his heartstrings, which required some such influence as this to draw it to vibrating tension.

After pressing his hand in silence to her breast, Aiāla stole softly away, leaving Brand to dream till dawn of her loveliness. She returned early next morning, bringing food, clean linen, and other things conducive to his comfort. The rain had again set in, and the prospect which Brand regarded from the windows of his prison was the most cheerless imaginable,—just dingy, yellow walls streaming with water. He again besought the girl to try and arrange for his escape, and after a few moments of deep thought she promised to let him out, irrespective of risks, on the

following day. It had hitherto struck Brand as extremely strange that she should have consistently placed obstacles in the way of every project for escaping which he suggested.

All day long Aiāla kept flitting up and down the ladder. She was dressed in the most splendid attire. After the death of her uncle the more valuable of the contents of the shop had been removed for safe-keeping to the old priest's dwelling-house, and the girl thus had access to a quantity of gorgeous Eastern finery, and in this she now revelled to the utmost. The intimacy between her and Brand made rapid progress. She was radiant with smiles so long as he avoided the subject of his departure. When, however, he made any allusion to his wish to escape, she wept bitterly, and begged of him not to be her undoing.

They talked of the scenes of their childhood in far-off Java,—of how the children used to go forth in troops in the early morning from the "kampong," the village built of bamboo, to gather into baskets the "melatti" flowers that had fallen during the night from the trees, until the ground was covered as with a white carpet; of how they would

weave the blossoms into garlands and long festoons, wherewith all, even the criminal going to suffer on the gallows, would be decked. From thus talking over scenes which they both knew and loved, they attained to a strange intuitive understanding of each other. Aiāla had been her father's favourite child, and he, without teaching her his own tongue, had developed her mind to a degree almost unknown among women of her mother's race. Her finely-moulded head contained a strange farrago of fantastic and poetical notions, and for one so illiterate she had a wonderful gift of language. Her memory was very retentive, especially for poetry and passages from the Koran, which she would repeat with a remarkable faculty of original expression, while her sensitive face reflected the spirit of the words.

Brand, however, did not even remotely suspect what was the true state of the case, — that the girl loved him with the full strength of her passionate nature. The man who had appeared twice in her life, each time in a great crisis, had stamped himself indelibly on the untouched wax of her heart, and she felt, without even defining the feeling to herself, that her love and her life had

become one and the same. From the day when he lifted her from the cab in his arms she had tenderly cherished the memory of the strong, tall, blue-eyed stranger who had rescued her from a terrible death, and who looked like a god among the uncouth, patois-jabbering crowd, from the like of which her only acquaintance was drawn. Moreover, was he not of the race of the dead father whom she had loved so well? And when he rushed into her presence, a hunted fugitive, had she not—after the first shock of surprise was over—been filled with exalted joy at the thought that this man of men was hers to save or to slay with a word? And whilst he cowered until dawn behind the curtain within a yard of where she lay, outwardly composed, but inwardly seething as though with the thunder and the tumult of the sea pent within her breast, throughout the long night made splendid by starry, sleepless dreams, had her very soul not melted in the ardent crucible of her burning hopes and re-formed in the mould of the man whose personality was a revelation to her, far nobler than her highest ideal?

Aiāla had hitherto been loverless; now passion awoke in her torrid, Eastern nature

like a summer tempest on an Indian Sea, and its waves' resistless strength undermined what had hitherto been the impregnable rock of Brand's insensibility. All the untaught wiles which are as instinctive to the natural woman in her youth as is preening its feathers to a bird in the spring-time, were lavished on him, and long before he even suspected it, Aiāla had filled his heart as completely as he filled hers.

She bade him farewell in the dusk, promising to return as soon as ever she could manage again to escape. When the weary, leaden-footed hours dragged past and yet she did not come, Brand was in despair. He thought something had happened to prevent her coming at all that night, and the agony of longing which he underwent taught him unmistakably that the love he had dreamt of, but never before experienced, had at length made its home in his heart.

A sound in the room below threw him into an ecstasy of expectation, and just afterwards the trap-door was lifted with the usual creaking sound which he had come to regard as sweeter than the sweetest music. It was absolutely dark; the moon had not yet arisen, and the wind-driven

rain hissed against the streaming window-panes.

Brand came forward to the corner where the trap-door was, and his outstretched hands came in contact with Aiāla, who was shivering, apparently with cold, beneath a heavy, wet cloak. She slid from his attempted embrace with a low breath of laughter, and when he followed her she again eluded him. This, acting on his over-wrought mind and his inexperience, vexed him sorely, and he sat down on the chair in silence and weary perplexity.

After a few moments she startled him by striking a match and lighting a small lamp, which she then placed on the bracket. Brand then noticed that she had hung dark cloths across the windows.

He stood up and looked at her in wonderment. A thick, dark cloak covered her from head to foot and, being drawn in around her throat with a string, formed a hood which quite hid her face. When she lifted the lighted lamp to the bracket he saw with a thrill that her arms were bare from firm, round wrist to shapely shoulder. Then she slowly turned towards him and gazed fixedly into his eyes from the darkness of her hood.

Lifting her hands slowly to her throat she untied the string, and then made a sudden, backward movement with her head. The cloak slid down behind her to the floor.

She was clad after the fashion of her native land in a "kabaai," or robe of delicate, fawn-coloured silk, and a "sarong" or skirt of the same material, cerise-coloured. Her thick, glossy, black hair hung loosely over her shoulders ; her throat, arms, and ankles were bare, and her feet were covered by delicate sandals of crimson silk. In her hair and around her bosom were garlanded white blossoms of a kind that Brand was unacquainted with, strung together after the manner of the "melatti" flowers, and emitting a very sweet and pungent scent.

They stood, hardly a pace apart, and gazed at each other, the girl with parted lips and heaving breast, and Brand awed to a statue before her beauty and the spell of her eyes. Then she said in a steady voice :

"I have come to bid you farewell. To-morrow morning the doors will be opened to you, and you can go forth ; then I shall die."

She spoke with a calmness that carried conviction. Brand's love had become as necessary to her untutored heart, with its

wild, elemental promptings, as the air to her nostrils; and he, with his perceptions rendered acute by emotional stress, knew that she spoke but the truth.

Then Aiāla's strength seemed suddenly to give way; she covered her face with her hands, swayed like a lily in the wind, and faltered to the ground at Brand's feet.

The spell was broken; the love in the rising stream of which he had unwittingly been standing overwhelmed and bore Brand away in its resistless course. He bent down to Aiāla and clasped her to his breast. She nestled to him with low murmurs of blissful content, and wound her soft arms about his neck.

As their lips met for the first time, the sordid world rolled away and was forgotten, and they seemed to rest on some palm-shaded isle in a sea of infinite delight, where the waves sang around them strong songs of peace and joy.

III

Thus love grew, bourgeoned, and flowered between these two thus strangely thrown together in the house of pestilence and

death, like some rich, exotic plant. Brand no longer thought of departing. To him had come the end of Time, and the realization of Eternity through infinity of joy. The ever-present danger of discovery, the inevitable consequence of which would have been death, added ardour to their bliss even as wind causes glowing embers to flush and glow more hotly. Their short meetings were full of rapture, and the hours they spent apart were long, delicious trances of remembrance and anticipation. Time was like a golden chain studded here and there at uncertain intervals with fire-hearted rubies.

The rainy, tempestuous weather continued, but the lovers did not miss the sun by day nor the stars by night. Safe in their warm nest they would listen to the muffled roar of the rain on the masoned roof, thrilling with a delicious realization of the contrast between the cold and darkness outside, and the love and light which filled their little chamber. Under the influence of fulfilled love Aiāla became a new being, developing fresh and wonderful qualities every day. To her lover she was a perpetually unfolding rose of wonder and sweetness. Once, in the midst of a spring-day noon of changing moods she

burst into tears, flung herself at Brand's feet, and confessed that she had all along deceived him as to the difficulty of escaping ; that on any of the nights of his imprisonment she could, without much danger, have guided him through the almost deserted house and into the silent street. Would he forgive her for having thus deceived him? He only found in what she told him a reason for loving her the more, if that were possible.

One morning, after Aiāla had left him, Brand heard the sound of footsteps and voices in the lower chamber. Then followed silence. After some little time he lifted the trap-door and looked down. He saw, lying upon trestles, the hideous corpse of an old woman,—another victim of the scourge. When Aiāla came again she did not mention the circumstance, and when Brand asked her about it she appeared to consider it not worth regarding. The body was that of the last of the original domestic servants, who had died during the previous night. It was removed for burial after dark.

Now and then Brand thought carelessly of the possibility of either Aiāla or himself taking the disease, but familiarity had, as is usual, bred contempt for the danger.

Moreover, Brand was strongly imbued with fatalism, absorbed insensibly from the people among whom so much of his life had been spent. Once when he alluded to the danger, Aiāla mocked lightly at the notion, and he felt reassured. The superabundant vitality with which she thrilled seemed as though it were sufficient to defy any form of disease, if not death itself.

Aiāla took the greatest delight in ministering to the wants of her lover. She brought him food in delicate variety, and changes of wearing apparel. He now dressed like a Malay of superior rank, in loose, white trousers, long smock, short, sleeveless jacket of velvet, pointed sandals, and silken turban. The latter she would over and over again skilfully roll for him, place upon his head, and immediately disarrange with an embrace.

Seven golden days dawned under a pall of tempest and drenching rain, each with a brimming cup of delight for their unsated lips. Seven nights of fierce storm curtained them away from a world of shifting shadows with a rich fabric woven in the golden loom of happy dreams. Death was busy all around them, but they heeded him not, and he forebore to smite. Perhaps the genius of

happiness that guested with them for a little time shielded their nest with a wing which even the Destroyer's dart could not pierce.

The eighth morning brought a cloudless sun, before the garish face of which their bliss melted like a snow-flake on the lips of a rose.

When Brand looked out into the bright, bracing morning he awoke from his trance and again yearned for freedom. The whole man in him revolted against this hiding like a mole in the earth. The sunshine and the cool, moist air seemed to call him forth in tones of imperative command. His love for Aiāla had not in the slightest degree diminished, but a horror at his situation, which was accentuated by the pure, blue sky, fell upon him when he realized the nature of his surroundings. A longing to lave in the cold, cleansing sea came over him, and he felt that he must go forth, taking Aiāla with him. He was prepared to acknowledge her as his wife in the face of the world, and in all his plans for the future she was inextricably woven.

Aiāla had slipped away from his side before dawn while he was yet sleeping, and it was the middle of the forenoon before she

was able to return. She found him pacing to and fro like a caged lion raging for its freedom.

Brand clasped her in his arms and poured out his trouble in a torrent of passionate words. She freed herself gently from his embrace and knelt before him with her head bowed in token of submission. She had understood in a flash the state of her lover's mind, and the strength of his longing to go forth, and she submitted to the inevitable. One of the most marked effects which their mutual, virginal passion had upon these two was, that they became one in a very real sense. Aiāla, as a woman, naturally absorbed more of Brand than he did of her, and it was the intuitive perception of his thoughts, his hopes, and his needs manifested by Aiāla which struck her lover with a sense of wonder and almost with fear. It sometimes felt as though he had recreated her in his own mental and spiritual image and likeness.

It was decided that Brand was to make his escape just before midnight, Aiāla guiding him through the front door into the street. He was to dress as a Malay, leaving his own clothes to be disposed of by Aiāla amongst the lumber in the lower room. He was to

return forty-eight hours later, and these two meant then to wander forth together into the wide world.

The last few hours of companionship which remained to them seemed to be blighted by the shadow of impending woe. After they had arranged the preliminaries regarding Brand's departure they hardly spoke again to each other, but sat locked in a silent, close embrace. The vivid colour and the ethereal, bliss-born light had faded out of Aiāla's lovely face, and given place to a shaded pallor. Her eyes were more wonderful than ever; the pupils having dilated to such an extent that the irises were completely absorbed.

It was at about eleven o'clock that Aiāla ascended the ladder for the last time, for the purpose of leading her lover forth. She hung around his neck a thin gold chain with a large pearl clasped by a rough, gold band attached to it. They bade each other a silent, tearless, passionate farewell, and then went forth, down the ladder and across the yard, Aiāla leading and Brand following with steps that faltered now that the parting was so near. Had Aiāla asked him to stay now at the last moment he would have done

so without hesitation, but although the word was probably upon her lips, for she always divined Brand's moods, she did not speak it.

Once they paused in going along the passage to the front door, and Aiāla lifted a curtain that hung before a doorway. Brand looked and saw the old priest sitting on the floor in mourning garb, still with ashes strewn upon his head. A dim light shone upon the pain-worn face, the sightless eyes, and the trembling lips that moved in prayer to the God whom the Great Prophet of Islam had always called "the compassionate—the merciful." On the floor near the mourner lay the green robe and the turban of his dead son.

Brand walked down the street with a heart like lead in his breast, and a sense as of one who, having died and reached Paradise, and again come to life, knows that henceforth he must be a stranger among the sons of men.

IV

Brand arrived at his lodgings just before midnight, and went up-stairs quietly to his room. The front door of the house had been

left open for some of the lodgers who were still out. To his relief he met no one on the stairs or in the passages; otherwise he would have had some difficulty in accounting for his being in Malay garb.

Upon awaking in the morning he had some difficulty in persuading himself that he had been away for ten days,—or indeed at all. The last week seemed now a fevered dream of terror and delight. Was it real? His hand accidentally touched Aiāla's pearl which hung from his neck, and his doubts vanished. He sprang out of bed, dressed as quickly as he could, and hurried down to the sea to have the swim he so longed for. The cold southern current was sweeping into Table Bay. Brand plunged into the surf, and swam out beyond the line of breakers. He felt the clean, stinging water dissipating the fantasies which were woven around him, and Aiāla's image rose clear over the mists that had clouded his understanding, like the sun over a huddled mass of dissolving, wind-driven clouds.

After his swim Brand walked slowly back to his lodgings, thinking over the strange problem set before him for solution, and wondering as to what the outcome of the

matter would be. As to Aiāla, his intentions were clear and distinct up to a certain point. He meant to take her away at once from the house of pestilence, and eventually to marry her, but he knew enough of law to be quite sure that, she being under age, he could not marry her without the consent of her guardians, and he knew enough of Mahometan prejudice to be certain that such consent he would never obtain.

What in the mean time was he to do? He could not bring Aiāla to the lodging-house—that was quite certain. His means, moreover, were very limited. He had been waiting in Cape Town in the hope of obtaining employment from a certain mining syndicate there being formed, but as yet no definite offer had been made him. However, Aiāla must, under any circumstances, be at his side from and after the second midnight following—that was the only certain and important thing; all the rest was mere detail.

Brand's landlady was much astonished when he put in an appearance at breakfast, but he silenced all inquiries on the subject of his absence by stating that he had been called suddenly away, and that he supposed

his letter explaining his absence had miscarried.

After breakfast he went to his room, and, feeling unwell, threw himself on the bed, and fell asleep. It was late in the afternoon when he awoke with a violent headache, a feverish skin, and a burning thirst. In the evening delirium set in and a doctor was sent for. He pronounced the malady to be small-pox, so next morning Brand was removed to the lazaretto.

In spite of the fact that Brand had recently been vaccinated the attack was a severe one. When he regained his senses at the cessation of the fever he wanted, weak as he was, to rush out and go to Aiāla, but this, of course, the attendants prevented him from doing. Afterwards he resigned himself quietly to his fate, and remained at the lazaretto until discharged as cured.

He took a cab and returned to his lodgings, where he found, to his relief, that the disease had not been communicated to any of the other inmates. As the day wore on he watched the slowly-sinking sun with chafing impatience, longing for the hour when he could go to Aiāla, clasp her to his heart, and explain his absence.

At length the hour of eleven was slowly struck from the belfry tower, and Brand hurried to the nearest cab-stand. He hired a cab to convey him in the direction of the silent street, and discharged it some little distance from his destination. He went forward on foot, and when he got close to the house he knew so well, he noticed a small crowd of people congregated before the door. They were all Malays. He moved in among them and listened to their conversation. He heard one man relating to another, evidently a stranger, how every member of the old priest's family had been carried off by the scourge, and how the young girl, his grand-daughter, whose body they were now about to bury, had almost recovered, but had died of weakness through refusing to take nourishment after her convalescence had set in.

Then the door opened, and the body, wrapped in white linen, was carried out and borne onward upon a bier by four men. The little crowd of people formed a procession behind it. Brand, with a heart of frozen stone in his desolated breast, followed after the others.

The *cortège* wended slowly to the Malay

burial-ground high on the mountain side, and here Brand stood among the tinselled tombs and saw Aiāla's body lowered into the dark grave. He listened in dread for the first sound of the earth falling upon the flesh that he loved, and that had thrilled to his kisses, but found to his surprise that it had little or no effect upon his feelings. The funeral was hurriedly and unceremoniously conducted, so in a very few minutes the grave was filled in, and those who gathered round it dispersed.

Brand threw himself upon the new-made grave. As yet no wailing mourners had come to desecrate the spot. All around him the weird howls arose, but they smote unheeded on his ear. He was just stupidly trying to recall Aiāla's face, and finding to his annoyance that he could not do so clearly. Then he began to murmur her name over and over to himself softly, in different cadences.

An old man, probably a priest, came quietly up and bent over him. Brand had kept on repeating Aiāla's name. The old man laid a kindly hand on his shoulder and reminded him in the Malay tongue of the Prophet's words of consolation to mourners, and pro-

mises to such as die in the faith. Brand listened without being able to understand a word of what he was saying for some time; but an expression that Aiāla had been in the habit of using in her poetical moods fell from the old man's lips, and startled the stunned hearer into momentary animation. The passage where the expression occurs is at the beginning of that chapter of the Koran known as "The Rending Asunder." Brand interrupted the garrulous flow of the old man's talk by continuing the passage which he had unconsciously quoted:

"When the seas are let loose, and when the tombs are turned upside down, the soul shall know what it hath done and left undone."

The old man stood up and moved quietly away.

THE END

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